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Notes to Contributors and Call for Papers

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OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS, SAFETY CULTURE AND BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY OF FISHERMEN IN JAMESTOWN, ACCRA

Maxwell A. Asumeng¹ & Benjamin Y. Folitse²

Abstract

This study investigated occupational hazards, safety culture and safety behaviour among fishermen in Jamestown Landing Beach, Accra. Primary data was collected from one hundred and fifty five (155) selected artisanal fishermen using questionnaire. Running correlational and regression analysis on the data, the results indicated that the main causes of accidents at sea included; fatigue and reduced alertness, overloading of canoes, inadequate training and supervision; belief in supernatural protection, defective equipment and facilities, professional pride, and lack of awareness of hazards. Also, age of the fishermen and their fishing tenure influenced their safety behaviours and practices. Further, when demographic variables of the fishermen were controlled for, adherence to safety culture predicted their safety behaviours and practices. The study recommends that to facilitate adherence to safety culture, promote safety behaviours and reduce accident rates at sea, fishermen need to hold regular safety meetings. Also, the Ministry of Fisheries needs to organize education and training programmes in occupational hazards, risk perception and safety at fishing for artisanal fishermen.

Keywords: Artisanal fishery, occupational safety, workplace hazard, fishing in Ghana, maritime safety.

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Introduction

Fishing is one of the world's oldest occupations and probably the most dangerous occupation in the world (Udolisa, Akinyemi, & Olaoye, 2013). Globally, protection of workers against work-related injuries and illnesses has over the years been an issue of great concern to employees, workers, governments, and the general public (Monney et al. 2014). This is because a safe working environment does not only promote the physical, mental and social well-being of workers, but also saves cost associated with medical bills, compensation, work interruption, loss of experienced personnel, and others resulting from accidents at the workplace (Hughes & Phil, 2007). Safety at sea is a serious issue for the commercial fishing industry and artisanal fishing because fishing has always been, and continues to be a dangerous occupation; it ranks highly in all assessments of occupational dangers including risk-taking, injuries, and fatalities (Abraham, 2001; Mohd et al. 2014).

The Ghanaian waters, which form part of the Gulf of Guinea, are endowed with abundant fishery resources (Mensah & Quartey, 2002; Mehl et al, 2005). The fishing sector in Ghana plays an important role contributing significantly to national economic development objectives related to employment, livelihood support, poverty reduction, food security, foreign exchange earnings and resource sustainability. Fish is a preferred source of animal protein in Ghana, and about 75 percent of the total domestic production of fish is consumed locally (Mensah, 2012). Fish is expected to contribute 60 percent of animal protein intake. The per capita consumption is estimated to be about 25 kg per annum. Over 2 million fishermen, processors and traders participate in this sector. Fishermen and their dependents accounts for about 10% of the population (Aggrey-Fynn & Sackey-Mensah, 2012). With a marine coastline of five hundred and fifty (550) kilometres stretching from Aflao in the East to Half Assini in the West, the fishing industry plays a major role in sustainable livelihoods and poverty reduction in several households and communities (Mensah, 2012). Fish is the country's most important non-traditional export commodity and the fisheries sub-sector accounts for about 5 percent of the agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Export earnings from fish and fishery products on average account for approximately 60 million US

Dollars annually (Hinne, 2016). The fishing industry in Ghana is based on resources from the marine, inland (freshwater) and aquaculture sectors. The Volta Lake, reservoirs, fishponds and coastal lagoons are the main sources of freshwater fish in Ghana. However, fishermen in Ghana continue to face problems with safety at sea which pose a serious challenge to them. In developing countries like Ghana, fishermen give little attention to safety culture and safety behaviours which in turn affect their productivity (Aggrey-Fynn & Sackey-Mensah, 2012; Mensah, 2012).

The role of a fisherman is demanding in terms of both time and energy. Their working environment can be uncomfortable at many times. They have to stay for long trips at sea on the vessel. They also have to cooperate with their crew even if there is bad relationship between them, thus making the job of a fisherman more difficult (El-Saadawy, 2014). Other factors that could impair safety in this workforce include isolated locations, long working hours, and days with little rest. Furthermore, they are exposed to high demands in their work, which may conflict with a normal family life. These factors may increase the risk of stress-related symptoms in fishermen (Jeebhay 2004). Similarly, the deck of a fishing boat used in Ghana has a congested work area, crowded with fishing gear and equipment which provides inadequate safety features for the fishermen. It is estimated that more than 2 million workers die each year from work related accidents and diseases. Also, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that workers suffer 270 million accidents and at least 335, 000 fatal injuries annually.

Coastal Artisanal Fishing and Accidents

Artisanal fishing, in contrast with heavy machinery and high mechanized fishing/large vessel fisheries, is a type of fishery system with an open beach using very basic fishing methods such as the use of dug out boats or canoes often powered with outboard motors. The use of canoes can be found in almost all 300 landing sites in 200 fishing villages along the Ghanaian coastline. It is generally considered small-scale fishing because it is dependent solely on local resources (Mensah, 2012). The artisanal fishing sub-sector consists of about 11,219 traditional canoes and employs

a wide range of fishing gear which includes purse seines, beach seines, drift gill nets (DGN), and surface set nets. Artisanal fishermen also use various forms of bottom set-nets, hook and line. The lagas and the DGN fleet operate beyond the 50-meter depth zone. The lagas are however well equipped with ice, food and fishing aids like fish finders and Geographical Positioning System (GPS). The artisanal fishing sub-sector produces about 70-80 per cent of the total annual volume of marine fish catch comprising mainly of small pelagic fish species and some valuable demersal fish species (Mensah, 2012).

Available statistics for countries with significant commercial fisheries indicate that fishing occupational fatalities and injuries occur at rates much higher than national averages for occupational fatalities and injuries, regardless of the level of industrialization (FAO, 2001). The high rates of fatalities and injuries can be partially attributed to the inherently dangerous working conditions involved in the industry. These include: an unpredictable and often hostile marine environment; unstable work platforms; resources that are mobile, variable, diverse, regularly dangerous (bites, poison, allergies) and often located in remote offshore areas; moveable and often heavy equipment and a dependence on vessels for shelter and survival (Ben-Yami, 2000; Thomas, Lincoln, Husberg, & Conway, 2001). Furthermore, shift work and the intense and prolonged working activity typically associated with fishing can cause fatigue, a common factor in many fishing-related incidents (ILO, 1999).

While fisheries are inherently dangerous, the actual levels and types of safety culture and safety behaviour vary across fisheries and over time, thus pointing to the role of social, economic, cultural and regulatory factors influencing safety within the industry (Kwei & Ofori-Adu, 2005). Similarly, risks associated with small boat fisheries tend to differ from those associated with large vessel fisheries with the former more subject to foundering and the latter sometimes more subject to the risk of industrial-type accidents, such as getting caught in machinery. Risks may also vary with the types of fishing activities, area of operation, vessel condition, and crew experience (Windle, Neis, Bornstein, & Navarro 2005).

The artisanal and small-scale fisheries are the most vulnerable sectors as sea safety measures are the weakest when compared to big mechanised fishing vessels. The traditionally built fishing crafts are poorly equipped in terms of navigation, communication and safety (Chakravarty, Venkata & Ganesh 2016). The crew will have little or no training on maritime safety. The introduction of motorisation has proved to be advantageous for more profits and the risk involved has also been increased because the aim of motorized fishing craft is basically to organize distant water fishing (SIFFS 1991).

There is every possibility of increase of the risk as the fishermen venture deep into the sea and spend more time for fishing compared to the non-motorised crafts which fish within the reach of shore for few hours. But the same traditional non-motorised craft is motorized and employed for the distant water fishing without any check on the seaworthiness and other precautions in respect of sea safety though the fishermen may take certain measures using their wisdom and past experience. According to Chakravarty et al, (2016), there is no concrete sea safety measures passed through legislation for the sea going fishermen as the existing marine fisheries regulation act does not speak much about this aspect. Improved safety at sea has for decades been of major concern to various institutions, national authorities, non-governmental organizations and individuals, who recognize that a functional legal framework is the prerequisite for concerted actions for improved safety. The model for such legislation has already been provided by various international organizations (Chakravarty, et al. 2016; Petursdottir, Hannibalsson, & Turner, 2001).

Studies (Rodrigues & Udaya, 2013; Ansuya et al. 2014) concluded that knowledge and practice regarding safety measures in fishing occupation is inadequate. These studies highlight the need to inspire fishermen to improve their safety at work place and develop positive attitude about utilization of safety devices.

Safety Culture

The UK Health and Safety Commission (HSC) (1993, p.4) defined safety culture as: ‘the product of the individual and group values, attitudes, competencies and patterns of behavior that determine commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, an organisation’s health and safety programmes’. This definition is reiterated by Turner, Pidgeon, Blockley, and Tom (1989) as the set of beliefs, norms, attitudes, roles, and social and technical practices that are concerned with minimizing the exposure of employees, managers, customers and members of the public to conditions considered dangerous or injurious. In sum, safety culture is about promotion of safety by prevention as a core company, organizational or industrial value. It is concerned with the commitment to an organisation’s health and safety programmes by both individual workers and management. Three elements necessary for the successful introduction and retention of a safety culture: are awareness of, commitment to; and competence in occupational safety issues (Millward, 2005).

In the context of artisanal fishing, safety culture is about the extent to which fishermen including their supervisors and team leaders are competent, aware of, and committed to, their safety programmes in order to promote safety and prevent accidents at sea (Chmiel, 2000; Millward, 2005; Redmill, 1997). Studies show that organizations with poor safety culture record high accident rates compared with organizations with good safety culture, which record low accident rates. Also, safety culture is considered as leading indicator of safety behaviour (Clarke, 2000; Toole, 2002; Elms, 2001).

Safety Behaviour

Safety behaviours are one of the major concerns of most organizations globally. Safety behaviours are classified into two main categories: safety compliant behaviour and safety participation behaviour (Neal, Griffin, & Hart, 2000). Safety compliant behaviours may be described as the core safety activities that employees need to carry out to ensure workplace safety, whereas safety participation behaviours can be considered as

behaviours that may not directly contribute to workplace safety, but help to develop a working environment that supports safety (Neal, Griffin, & Hart, 2000). However, there may be variation with regard to the influence of safety knowledge and safety communication, training, safety system, and physical work environment on safety compliance and safety participation.

According to Eklöf and Toèrner (2002), stimulating safety behaviour through attempts to increase risk awareness is a common strategy. One problem with this is that such attempts may not lead to altered behaviour as long as present behaviour is more or less imperative, as may well be the case in fishery, or if the subjective value of the risky behaviour outbalances the risks.

Study Objectives

Occupational health and safety issues have received very little attention in Ghana (Asumeng, Asamani, Afful, & Agyemang, 2015; Pupulampu & Quartey, 2012). Some studies in the formal sector have focused on safety issues and quality of work life in the mining sector (Froko, Asumeng, & Nyarko, 2014; 2015), and the banking industry (Asumeng, Coleman, & Dadzie, 2015). Other studies on occupational safety practices in informal industrial sector have been conducted on vehicle repair artisans, small scale sawmilling industries and spray painting industry (Monney et al , 2014 ; Ochire-Boadu, Kusi, & Lawer , 2014; Adei & Osei-Bonsu , 2011; Cudjoe, 2011). However, little or no attention is given to safety issues and practices among fishermen in Ghana.

Considering the important role played by fishermen, and the fishing industry in national development, this study sought to investigate the factors that contribute to accidents at fishing, determine the relationship between safety culture and safety behaviours among fishermen; and the influence of demographic variables on safety behaviour of fishermen in the artisanal fishing industry in Ghana.

Method

Study Area

The study was conducted in James Town, a suburb of Accra, Ghana. It is 99m above sea level (www.citipedia.info). James Town has a population of about 4,154 people according to the 2010 census. James Town actually covers James Town and Usher Town. It is recognized as one of the major Towns during the colonial rule of Old Ghana or Gold coast. The urbanization of Accra is mostly related to the settlement of the British in Accra formerly known as the Gold coast during the early sixteenth century. Before then, the area was inhabited by the Kpeshi-Ga speaking people who migrated from Niger to settle there. The most predominant economic activity in James Town is fishing. Fishermen averagely go on fishing six days in the week; except on Tuesdays which is a non-fishing day according to the tradition of the indigenous people.

The early day of colonial rule was characterized by slavery, which brought much development to the coast as it served as a venue for trade. During this time, a number of forts and castles were built as administrative structures to monitor transactions among the indigenous people and the colonial masters. Some of these structures are the Fort Usher built in 1605 and James Fort built by the British in 1673 (van Dantzig, 1999). During the 20th century, James Town began to experience rapid population growth and entrepreneurship. James Town and its surrounding communities are known to be housing communities of most of the major government administrative structures and the central point for wholesale commerce today.

Population

The population of the study was artisanal fishermen in the James Town fishing community in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. According to the Ghana National Council for Canoe Fishermen (2018), from the Marine Canoe Register of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly there were four hundred and sixty four (464) registered canoe fishermen in James town in 2017. The snowball technique was applied in selecting respondents from the population. This technique was employed during the course of the

survey, whereby, fishermen respondents connected to one another through direct and indirect links were identified to complete the questionnaires. In all, 155 respondents were selected for the study.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Primary data were collected in June, 2017 through completion of questionnaires with selected fishermen. The questionnaire was organized into four major themes to capture respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, contributory factors to accidents at fishing, safety culture and safety behaviour. Contributory factors to accident causation were measured using a list of thirteen (13) items (Udolisia et al. 2013). Respondents were required to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale, how each of the factors was perceived as very high = 5 to very low = 1 contributory factor to accident causation at sea. Safety culture was measured using an adopted 5- point Likert 14-item scale (Idris, Dollard, Coward & Dormann, 2012) ($\alpha = .89$ mean score =42). For current purposes, the term 'supervisor' used in the original scale was replaced with the term 'chief fisherman' in the new instrument. A sample item is "The chief fisherman ensures that safety problems discovered during safety inspections and evaluations are corrected immediately". Respondents were required to indicate how often each statement about safety at fishing is dealt with, responses ranging from 1= never to 5 = always. Safety behaviour was measured using an adopted 5-point Likert 10-item scale (Bronkhorst, 2015) ($\alpha = .81$, mean score =30). A sample item is 'I use the correct safety procedures for carrying out fishing. Respondents were required to indicate how frequently they engage in certain behaviours at fishing, with responses ranging from never = 1 to always = 5. Three (3) research assistants were trained in interviewing skills as well as the meaning and interpretation of each item in the local dialect - "Ga" which enabled them to help and guide the fishermen to complete the questionnaires and provide data for the study. Data obtained from 155 respondents were analyzed with SPSS version 21 using frequencies, percentages, correlational and regression analysis.

Results

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=155)

Demographics	Frequency	Percentages
Gender		
Male	155	100.0%
Age		
20-30 years	24	15.5%
31-41 years	40	25.8%
42-52 years	33	21.3%
53-63 years	27	17.4%
64-74 years	31	20.0%
Education		
Junior High School	67	43.2%
No Education	88	56.8%
Years of fishing experience		
6-11 years	35	22.6%
12-17 years	30	19.4%
18-23 years	13	8.4%
24-30 years	77	49.7%
Smoke		
Yes	84	54.2%
No	71	45.8%
Drinks Alcohol		
Yes	107	69.0%
No	48	31.0%
Smokes while fishing		
Yes	50	32.3%
No	105	67.7%
Drinks Alcohol while fishing		
No	155	100.0%

Results in Table 1 indicate that all the fishermen interviewed were males. Majority (62.6%) of them were between the age group of 20-52 years while 37.4% were between the ages of 53 and 74 years. Majority (56.8%)

of the fishermen had no formal education while 43.2% were educated up to Junior High School level. About 50% had between 24 and 30 years fishing experience, while 22.6% had between 6 and 11 years' experience. On the other hand, 19.4% had between 20 and 38 years of experience and only 8.4% had between 18 and 23 years of fishing experience. The results indicate that most of the fishermen started their profession at a younger age.

Majority of the fishermen (54.2%) were smokers of cigarettes whereas 45.8% were not. Similarly, 69.0% of the fishermen also drink alcohol. Again, majority of the fishermen (67.7%) said they do not smoke while fishing, whereas 32.3% do smoke while fishing at sea. However, all the fishermen maintained that they did not drink alcohol while fishing.

Factors Contributing to Accidents at Fishing

Table 2: Factors contributing to accidents at fishing

Factors	X	SD
Tiredness/fatigue and reduced alertness	4.79	.80
Overload of your boat or canoe (too much catch)	4.43	.56
Inadequate training, orientation, and supervision	4.29	.89
Believe in supernatural protection (invincible from accidents)	4.17	.84
Unsafe or defective equipment and facilities	4.12	.63
Professional pride (underestimated situation)	4.02	.76
Lack of skill and knowledge	4.00	1.10
Operational procedures (work and production schedule)	3.98	.92
Ignorance (lack of awareness of hazards involved)	3.85	1.16
Loss of concentration	3.76	1.11
Lack of right protective equipment and gear	3.73	1.22
Being a victim of some curse/spell/witchcraft	3.72	1.19
A bad day	2.96	1.18

Scale: 5=Very High, 4=High, 3=Moderate, 2=Low, 1=Very Low accident causation factor

Table 2 shows that out of thirteen factors listed in the study, seven were considered to be serious contributing factors to accidents to sea during fishing by artisanal fishermen ($x > 4.0$).

Safety Culture and Safety Behaviour

Table 3: Relationship between Safety Culture and Safety Behaviour

Variable	Mean	SD	Alpha	r	p
Safety culture	36.47	6.68	.703	-	-
Safety Behaviour	25.24	2.99	.721	.482**	.000

** $p < .01$

Table 3 shows that the mean score obtained by the fishermen for safety culture ($M=36.47$) is lower than the mean of the safety culture scale ($M=42$). Also, the mean score obtained by the fishermen for safety behaviour ($M=25.24$) is lower than the mean score of the scale ($M=30$). There is a positive moderate correlation between safety culture and safety behaviour ($r = .482$, $p < .001$). That is, safety culture influences safety behaviour of artisanal fishermen in the study area.

The Influence of Demographic Variables on Safety Behaviour

Table 4: Regression Analysis on the Influence of the Demographic Variables on safety behaviour

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	β	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Step1: Constant	16.2971	3.394			.000
Age	-.675	.294	-.309		.023
Years of fishing experience	1.782	.307	.753		.000
Education	-.504	.463	-.084		.278
Smoking	1.689	.480	.283		.001
Alcohol	-.946	.456	-.146		.040

Smoking while Fishing		-.561	.454	-.088	15.402	.219
Step 2: Constant		15.135	3.563			.000
Age		-.908	.270	-.416		.001
Years of fishing experience		1.705	.275	.720		.000
Education		.546	.457	-.091		.234
Smoke		1.294	.449	.216		.005
Alcohol		.667	.423	-.105		.112
Smoking while fishing		-.813	.421	-.128		.055
Safety Culture		.412	.079	.363	19.451	.000

$R^2 = .386$ and $.483$ for steps 1 and 2 respectively; $\Delta R^2 = .361$ and $.458$ for steps 1 and 2 respectively; $**p < .01$.

Table 4 indicates that age and years of fishing experience significantly influenced safety behaviour of the fishermen whereas formal education did not. Again, smoking whiles fishing significantly influenced safety behaviour whereas alcohol did not. Further observation shows that when the demographic variables (age, tenure, education, smoking, alcohol, smoking whiles fishing) were controlled, safety culture significantly predicted safety behaviour ($\beta = .361, p < .001$).

Discussion

This study found that high causative factors of accidents during fishing by artisanal fishermen in James Town, Accra Ghana, as indicated by their scores on the accident causation factors included: tiredness/fatigue and reduced alertness, overload of boat or canoe due to too much catch, inadequate training, orientation, and supervision, believe in supernatural protection, that is, invincible from accidents, and unsafe or defective equipment and facilities. Occupational accidents including artisanal fishing are unintentional but have definite causes. Understanding the causes would and should lead to the ability to prevent accidents from happening (Saal & Knight, 2000). Therefore, knowledge of causative factors of artisanal fishing by the fishermen in this study should help

reduce accidents at fishing. The causative factors of accident causation at fishing indicated by the fishermen, however, are human-related or due to human errors at sea. Human errors at fishing or human related factors are mainly attitudinal and unsafe behaviours at fishing. Fishermen need to maintain their canoes, boats and other fishing gears, avoid the use of defective and poorly maintained equipment and facilities, and use protective clothing. Lack of risk awareness, foolhardy attitude to risks including belief in supernatural protection/invincible from accidents, bad habits and lack of training in safe practices can be tackled through attitudinal, behavioural change and training in risk perception and maritime safety.

Demographic variables, particularly, age and years of fishing experience significantly influenced safety behaviour of the fishermen. This is consistent with other studies (Carpenter et al. 2002; Parker et al. 2007; Seixas et al. 2008) who found that demographic variables contribute to 80 – 90% of industrial accidents. Experienced fishermen are more likely to apply correct procedures at fishing compared to inexperienced ones who are more likely to apply incorrect procedures on the job. Also, as noted by other researchers (Abraham, 2001; Ben-Yami, 2002) smoking whiles fishing was reported to be a major accident causation among the fishermen. This also can be reduced by attitudinal and behavioural change approaches. Consistent with other studies, safety culture predicted safety behavior (Clarke, 2000; & Toole, 2002; Glennon 1982; Elms, 2001). Given that safety behavior practices are associated with reduced accidents rates, quality of performance and improved productivity (Challenge, 2001; Mearns, Whitaker, & Flin, 2003; Vredenburg, 2002), there is the need to improve safety culture of artisanal fishermen. Fishermen, including their supervisors and team leaders must be competent, be aware of, and be committed to their safety programmes in order to promote safety and prevent accidents at sea for improved performance and productivity (Chmiel, 2000; Millward, 2005; Redmill, 1997). First, fishermen must be aware of safety hazards and issues, particularly, the main causes of accidents at fishing including; fatigue and reduced alertness, overloading of canoes, inadequate training and supervision; believe in supernatural protection, defective equipment and facilities, professional pride, and

trained in day to day operation of safety systems and behaviours. Secondly, since the development of a culture can be directed and led but cannot be forced, fishermen including their leaders need to perceive the importance of safety as an integral part of their professional practices, and must be committed to it. Development of safety culture can be enhanced through regular safety meetings. Further, fishermen must appreciate and address the limitations and constraints of their competence; whether of knowledge, experience, facilities or resources. Safety competence may require training, retraining, a wide and detailed knowledge of the working system and human appreciation of the limits of the competence within their operations.

The implication for policy is that artisanal fishermen should be educated by the Ministry of Fisheries and the Fisheries Commission of Ghana on occupational hazards and accident causation, safety culture and safety behaviour at sea for the actual benefits of the fishing industry to be realised. This empowerment may find greater expression in the introduction and implementation of capacity building programmes that will lead to the acquisition of the relevant safety skills for enhanced delivery. There must be a sustained policy of continuous education and training for artisanal fishermen so that they will be abreast of the changing dynamics of the fishing industry and be able to respond to any possible emerging constraints at sea.

Conclusion

Though studies have been conducted on safety culture and safety behaviour in the formal and informal industrial sectors in Ghana, not much has been done among fishermen. The present study provides empirical evidence to support the relationship between safety culture, and safety behaviour of fishermen in the study area. Artisanal fishermen in Ghana need to adhere to safety culture to enhance safety behavioural practices which in turn will reduce accident rates during fishing for increased productivity. They need to hold regular safety meetings, and be aware of occupational hazards, causes of accidents, and how to engage in safety behaviours during fishing at sea.

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TRADING ON-AND-OFF THE ROAD: EXPERIENCES OF GHANAIAN INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADERS

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Abstract

The impacts of globalisation with respect to the organisation of space and time have been phenomenal. Among others, globalization has provided the opportunity to trade across national frontiers by road or through the frictionless realms of cyberspace. Informal trade through cyberspace, including the use of the internet, mobile telephony, electronic transfers, and receipts of funds and electronic banking have become popular in recent times. This is also due to challenges associated with informal trade by road such as poor transport systems and delays associated with the numerous check points within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region. Thus, informal trade through cyberspace offers both men and women traders the opportunity to circumvent challenges associated with trading by road. However, challenges with limited infrastructure, illiteracy vis-à-vis dominance of the English language in ICT usage, lack of access to cheap digital voice and data communication etc. may serve as impediments for these informal traders, especially women and keep them out of the benefits of globalization. This paper shares the experiences of Ghanaian men and women in informal cross-border trading within the ECOWAS. Using in-depth interviews, we examine whether men and women are taking advantage of these new ways of trading. Specifically, we map the different transportation routes that these men and women ply, the specific transport-related challenges that

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confront them, and how they are overcoming these challenges through the use of ICTs. The gendered differences have also been highlighted.

Keywords: Globalization, gender, transport, cross-border trade, Ghana

Introduction

In contemporary times, the role of transport in promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) over the period between 2016 and 2030 cannot be overemphasised. Transport has direct positive effects on the achievement of at least 5 out of the 17 Global Goals. These are goals 3, 7, 9, 11 and 12. Among others, goals 3, 9 and 11, for instance, promotes road safety; sustainable (urban) transport for all and sustainable transport infrastructure respectively. Indirectly, by promoting goal 11, for example, goal 5 which aims to ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ by 2030 is further attained. This is because while women and girls constitute the majority of the global workforce, they continue to remain transport disadvantaged, marginalized and invisible (Barwell, 1996; Potter, 2002; Seedhouse et al., 2016). Thus, while addressing the gender gap disparities, improving transport infrastructure is also important for the attainment of the basic mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which is to promote economic, political, social and spatial organization as well regional integration of the bloc. Within the ECOWAS, informal cross-border traders continue to play a significant role in the transportation and distribution of goods across the sub-region. Cross-border trade, and indeed the overall economic development of the sub-region is thus a function of its transport systems, a viewpoint echoed several centuries ago by a British colonial administrator who once said that “the material development of Africa may be summed up in one word—transport” (Lugard, 1922; cited in Hoyle, 1973:11).

So far, much of the investments in transport infrastructure have been focused on land-based transport systems (i.e. road and rail). This notwithstanding, available traffic data suggest that not more than 10% of

the road network carry over 1000 vehicles per day. In terms of road transport services, the mean sub-regional fleet density is about six vehicles per thousand inhabitants (ECOWAS, 2002). Consequently, the transportability or ease of movement of freight, in particular using these modes of transportation continues to be bogged with limited supply vis-à-vis growing demand for public and private transportation systems. It is not uncommon for informal traders to wait for long hours at transport terminals for a means of transport. Further delays are encountered at the numerous border checkpoints due to the lack of capacity of the multiple agencies tasked with entry and departure formalities to carry out their mandate with dispatch, and in some cases allegations of bribery and corruption (Dupuy, 2007; Wrigley-Asante, 2013). The use of sometimes rickety vehicles for such long-distance journeys and incessant violent robberies further pose safety and security concerns. In effect, issues with transportability affect traders' ability to improve on their livelihoods as delays affect their businesses and subsequently their socio-economic status (ibid).

The good news is that in recent years, the benefits of globalisation, especially the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs) including telephone, mobile phones, and the internet appear to reverse the tide in terms of increasing the possibilities for informal cross-border trading activities. These activities and interactions occur in the frictionless realms of cyberspace, or 'off-the-road' as Hanson (1998) calls it. Life 'off-the-road' has been associated with improvements in the quality of social, economic and political spheres of life, as has been well articulated in the existing body of literature (see for example Mumporeze and Prieler, 2017).

Specifically, for informal trade activities, Desai (2009) has highlighted on how poor women have used global economic openings to become cross-border traders and developed regional networks that have enabled them to raise their standards of living. Similarly, Overa's (2006) empirical study in Ghana over a decade ago, on the role of telecommunications on trading practices generally revealed some positive effects of new technologies on trading activities. The study showed that traders reduce transportation

costs and transaction costs due to the adaptation of telecommunication technologies. Traders who were equipped with technology had the ability to organize their activities more efficiently and made considerable costs savings. Most importantly, it enhances traders' reputation and builds their self-confidence. Indeed, living 'off the road' has phenomenally impacted socio-spatial interactions, the location of production, and the transportability of goods and services (Hanson, 1998; Galinsky et al., 2008). These studies undoubtedly show the opportunities associated with the process of globalization and for that matter, how the power of information technologies has catapulted the opportunities available to both men and women.

In her Fleming Lecture in Transportation Geography during the 1996 AAG Meetings, Hanson (1998: 242) notes that "much of the discussion about IT and its impacts has envisioned its 'deployment' throughout a relatively undifferentiated population of 'users' located in an undifferentiated, placeless, non-material space". The implication of such "mindset and without deliberate counteractions", she concludes, will only lead to a situation where "IT will simply end up exacerbating socio-spatial divisions within our society" (ibid). Years on, burgeoning literature has found wide gaps exist between males and females with respect to equitable access to and use of ICTs associated with the process of globalization (Ghadially, 2007; Mori, 2011; Hilbert, 2011; Mumporeze and Prieler, 2017).

In their study of mobile Internet use for income generation among first-generation urban youths in Ghana, Kenya, and Uganda, for instance, Bailur and Masiero (2017) saw the immense potential of the technology to offer jobs such as mobile money merchandise and advertisement. Not surprisingly, "male respondents had more direct experience of income generation" (Bailur and Masiero, 2017: 88). Indeed, they argued that while "women too see the potential...there is less evidence of use of mobile Internet by them, either to earn a living or to find work" (Bailur and Masiero 2017: 89). They concluded that costs, patriarchy and culture, as well as the sheer design of the technology which appears to suit and promote male dominance limit the "actualization of affordances implicit

in the mobile Internet” (Bailur and Masiero 2017: 93). Other authors (Huyer, 2006; Hilbert, 2011) have also blamed limited access to education and socio-cultural biases such as limited mobility and time constraints on the part of women as the reasons for the unequal gender access to ICTs. Indeed, in a recent Global Gender Gap Report, Rwanda has been hailed as the first sub-Saharan African country to have attained close to 80% gender parity, placing her 4th out of 144 countries surveyed globally (World Economic Forum, 2017). Yet, as was found out by Mumporeze and Prieler (2017), Rwandese women’s access to computers and the internet is still relatively low due to social, economic, educational, and cultural factors. The situation could be worse for other sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana which placed 72nd position in the same report.

In Ghana, transportation geographers have focused extensively on the movement of passengers and freight (for example see Agyemang, 2017; Amoh-Gyimah and Aidoo, 2013; Abane, 2011; Abane, 1993). Thus, discussions on “cyberspace and the societal impacts of information technology (IT)... [in Ghana, and elsewhere, has been the subject] ...of *speculation and prediction*” (Hanson, 1998: 241; emphasis ours). This present paper, therefore, responds to the call for studies to be conducted into “the implications of IT for access, and [gender] equity” (Hanson, 1998: 243). We focus on men and women informal cross-border traders, whose traditional ‘on-road’ activities are being substituted for ‘off-road’ changes taking place in recent years.

We believe that by highlighting the gender differences, appropriate strategies may be developed that could be beneficial to both male and female informal traders. Specifically, the paper ascertains the extent to which the transport challenges associated with informal cross-border trading is being circumvented by the opportunities associated with cyberspace.

The paper is divided into seven sections. After this introduction, the next section presents a conceptual overview of globalization, gender, and trade. This is followed by a review of Ghana’s ICT policies and the patterns of access to ICTS. A brief overview of the study area and the research

methodology adopted in the study are then presented after which we share the key study findings. We then discuss the findings based on existing studies and wrap up on the paper with concluding remarks and policy implications.

Globalization, Gender, ICT and Trade: A Review

The process of globalization associated with changing experiences of time and space and with the development of new communications technologies has brought about both benefits and challenges. Whilst this beneficial process is providing opportunities for world economic development and improving people's lives (Overa, 2006; Desai, 2009), there are other arguments that it as a dangerous force that increases inequality between nations and sexes, disempowers the weak and increases poverty (Huyer and Mitter, 2003; Dejardin, 2008; Gurmurthy and Chami, 2014). Nevertheless, the process of globalization is associated with new technological innovations that are transforming the lives of economies and individuals (Overa, 2006; Desai, 2009). Within the gender and development discourse, it has been highlighted that there are wide gaps between males and females in terms of technologies particularly Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the advantages associated with the process of globalization.

The literature highlights the fact that whilst globalization and its associated ICTs has created opportunities for men and women particularly in the developed world, it is argued that the information-based job opportunities are quite different for export-led manufacturing jobs with the latter requiring more skill and specialization in software development and investment analysis as compared to the former (see for instance Dejardin, 2008). Huyer and Mitter (2003) observe that globally, there is clear gender divide in the use of internet facilities with more men than women having access to information technologies. It is argued that males tend to have better access to mobile phones, internet, and computers than females and also tend to enjoy longer hours online as compared to females (Nsibirano et al., 2012; Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014). It is also noted that even in countries with a higher proportion of women internet users, their participation in internet-related jobs and the current information-based

jobs are replicating the gender division of labor in the export-led manufacturing jobs. This is so because women more than men are found in traditional roles such as banking, telecommunication and in low-skilled levels such as data entry, invoicing, pay-roll-administration and call-centre work, whilst men are more likely to be found in higher paid areas such as software development and computer analyst (Dejardin, 2008).

In many developing countries, whilst several factors such as poverty, illiteracy and language barrier impede access to ICT infrastructure, the situation is acuter for women than men due to several socio-cultural and religious barriers (see Primo, 2003; Suresh, 2011). Restrictions on women's mobility, limited time, interactions with members of the opposite sex, and misconceptions about women's ability to understand and manipulate technology, all constrain women in accessing or using ICTs (Huyer and Mitter, 2003; Hafkin and Huyer, 2007). Apart from language barrier, lack of self-confidence and fear of technology (Primo, 2003) have also been identified as some of the socio-cultural factors that affect women's use of technology. As noted by Mitter (2004), web pages are predominantly in English and this poses a challenge and excludes a large number of women who lack formal education in English. They also lack the technical competency as compared to men since the use of the internet, in particular, may require more complex and demanding skills (ibid). These differences in internet use stem from cultural norms, gender roles, and practices. In the United States, for instance, boys are five times more likely than girls to use home computers and parents are also likely to spend twice on ICT products for their boys than for their girls (Suresh, 2011).

But there is also available evidence, mostly in the developing world that women tend to have access to ICTs and that when they do have access, it tends to increase their income (Mitter, 2004; Hafkin and Huyer, 2007). Huyer and Mitter (2003) note that women who are involved in ICT projects benefit economically and socially as it can provide women with skills, training and market information for their small-scale businesses. ICT has opened more job opportunities in the digital technology sector as well as other sectors. With regards to ICT related jobs, women can play important roles in the hybrid jobs such as telemedicine that are rising up

(Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014). ICT has also made possible the restructuring of the production chain so as to allow women to break into the workforce, even from home, with innovative efforts (ibid). Taking traditional livelihoods into consideration, ICT can aid in information dissemination and e-learning among women in agricultural and non-agricultural fields (Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014; Islam, 2015). For example, the Zambia National Farmers Union has an SMS-based service that aids in the coordination of delivery times and the organization of market trips while the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) initiative creates learning opportunities for women farmers (Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014).

In Bangladesh, it has been found that women engage in successful businesses through the sale of telecommunication services through mobile telephones to other women (Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014). And in Peru, a nationwide network of housewives who were involved in lucrative baking activities sold their produce over the internet. This enabled the women to take care of their children at home and at the same time earn some income (Mitter, 2004). E-commerce has also been beneficial to women in India with some directly accessing the global markets by using the internet to support their activities with market and production information (Suresh, 2011). The health sectors of many economies have put ICTs to use in the dissemination of public health information as well as the breakdown of cultural barriers that prevent women from effectively accessing healthcare information and services (Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014). These studies show the potential positive effect on women's lives and their subsequent empowerment (Islam, 2015). It is therefore important to examine how informal cross border traders are also taking advantage of ICTs to trade.

Living off-the-road: ICT Policy and Contemporary Patterns of Access

A review of Ghana's ICT policy indicates a deliberate strategy to incorporate the country into the globalized economy by ensuring that "*every citizen and resident* of the Republic of Ghana shall have available,

high quality, and affordable access to information and communication services, to help transform Ghana into a knowledge-based society and technology-driven economy” (Government of Ghana [GoG], 2005, p.1; *emphasis ours*). Specifically, Ghana’s National Telecommunication Policy aims to provide:

- Universal access for all communities and population groups in Ghana to telephone, internet, and multimedia services by the year 2010;
- National penetration of universal telecommunication service to reach 25% of the population, including at least 10% in rural areas, by the year 2010;
- Connection of all schools, medical clinics, and Government offices and public and community broadcasting stations to advanced telecommunications services;
- Streamlined efficient, and effective regulation of the telecommunications industry on a fully transparent, technologically neutral, and competitively balanced basis;
- Affordable prices for telecommunication services, particularly for low-income citizens;
- Profitable investment opportunities for business in all segment of the market.

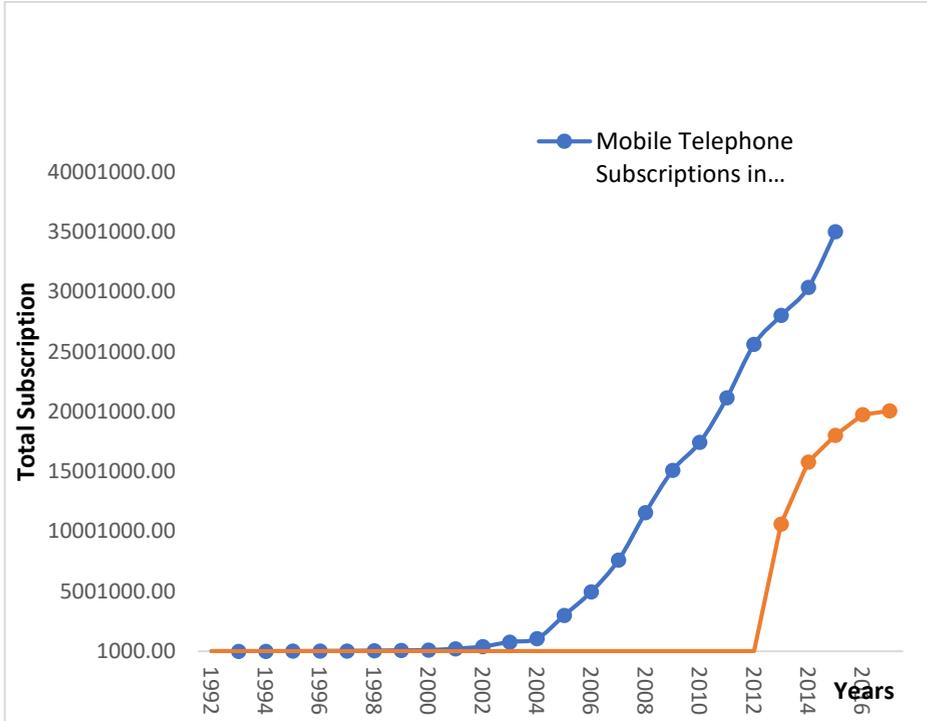
Ghana shall be seen as a first-class hub for international telecommunications and information industry investment jobs, and a leader in the transformation of Africa toward a full participation in the Information Society (GoG, 2005: 2)

In order to achieve the above-stated policy objectives, Ghana has liberalized basic and wireless telecommunications services. The evolution and liberalization of Ghana’s telecommunications sector has been the subject of an earlier study by Overa (2006). Marking its nascent beginning with the installation of the first-ever telegraph line in the then British Gold Coast in 1881, Ghana has undertaken major necessary reforms in the postal and telecommunications sub-sector particularly in the 1990s. This has resulted, among other things, in the opening up of the

telecommunications industry to private participation with its attendant improved telephone, mobile and internet service delivery.

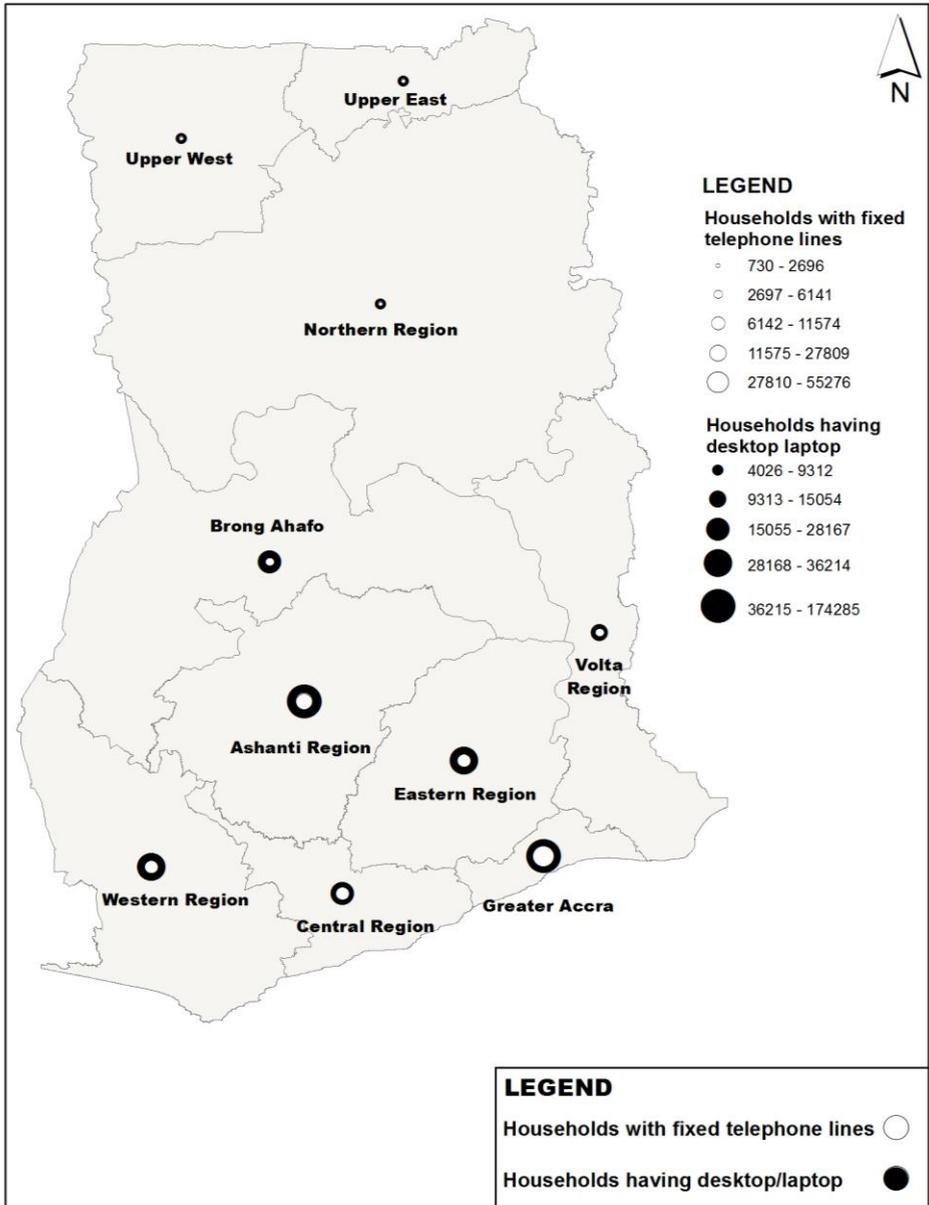
While Overa's (2006) pioneering work on ICT and trade has undoubtedly shed important light on the effects of policy interventions on growth and access to ICTs, it is imperative to provide a recent update on Ghana's involvement in the globalized economy since 2003, the period which the work of Overa (2006) was based on. Available evidence indicates a steady growth in mobile telephone subscriptions post-2003 and internet data consumption, especially from 2012 providing an indication of the extent to which Ghanaians are increasingly living "off the road" (see Figure 1).

By the close of September 2017, a total number of 37,445,048 (representing 130.91% penetration rate) and 22, 865, 821 (representing 80% of penetration rate) of Ghanaians have subscribed to mobile voice and data services respectively being provided by service operators such as MTN, Vodafone, Airtel-Tigo, and Glo (NCA 2018). Following the launch in July 2011 of the Mobile Number Portability (MNP) service, the National Communications Authority (NCA) has provided service users the flexibility of switching from one service provider to the other while maintaining their old mobile telephone numbers. So far, close to two million mobile telephony users have seamlessly switched from one mobile network provider to the other as of February 2015 (NCA, 2018a). The implication of this is that service providers are now more poised to render quality service to the Ghanaian mobile phone and internet user.



Source: NCA, 2018

With respect to fixed telephony, only two companies –Vodafone and Airtel –have been licensed so far to serve the 286,493 landline users in the country as at September 2017 (NCA, 2018b). Thus, a reader may have the impression that Ghanaians have access to “life off-road” with unrivalled ‘development opportunities, social cohesion, social participation and personal expression through ICTs’ (GoG, 2005). The reality is that there are geographical variations in access to and use of ICTs as shown in Figure 2.



Source: Map composed by authors with data sourced from the Ghana Statistical Service (2012)

Ownership rates and use of landline telephone and computer facilities are relatively higher in southern Ghana, particularly in the Greater Accra and Ashanti regions respectively, compared to three northern regions of Ghana. Overa (2006) earlier identified this north-south and rural-urban dichotomy in terms of access to telecommunication facilities and attributed the phenomenon to population density and the distribution of major road networks. This is a point already echoed in Hanson's (1998) study elsewhere that the location of the ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) appears to follow the urban hierarchy, further consolidating the economic power of denser and richer areas to the disadvantage of sparsely populated and poorer areas. The southern part of Ghana, in particular, is highly urbanized and is characterized by relatively brisk business activities.

Therefore, telecommunication infrastructure and services have also emerged in this geographical area further exacerbating the north-south gap in terms of development. Not only are there geographical differences but there are also gender gaps in relation to access to and use of technology in Ghana. Aggregate national data obtained from the Ghana Statistical Service shows gendered variation in access to and usage of mobile phones and the internet in favor of males (see Table 1).

Table 1: Gendered variations with respect to access to mobile telephones and the internet in Ghana

ICT Facility	Male	Female	Total
Mobile Phone	4, 275,211 (53.1)	3,774,197 (46.9)	8,049,408
Internet	832,789 (63.4)	480,182 (36.6)	1,312,971

Source: Ghana Statistical Service 2012 (Note: Figures in brackets are in percentages)

Overa (2006) also mentioned income differentials as one of the major determinants of access to telecommunication in Ghana. This may partly explain the gendered patterns in terms of access and use of technology.

The non-universality of access to “life off-road” is a major setback for Ghana, more importantly for informal cross-border trading where access to technology presents important assets for traders and their partners or customers. This current study intends to examine the extent to which informal cross-border traders in Ghana are taking advantage of ICTs to trade through cyberspace emphasizing the gendered differences.

Materials and Methods

Since the objective of the study was to ascertain the use of ICTs by cross-border traders, respondents were randomly selected from the Nima market. The Nima market is located within the Nima suburb, approximately five km from the central business district of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. The Nima suburb is characterized by congested buildings with rusted corrugated iron sheets, built without authorization, creating an impression of a distressed community and a typical slum in West Africa (Owusu et al., 2008). The market was selected because it is a well-known destination point for cross-border traders who ply the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region by road. Established in the 1960s, with a few traders, the market has grown over the years to accommodate traders of various ethnic backgrounds from Ghana and beyond the borders of Ghana, particularly traders from the ECOWAS sub-region.

A semi-structured interview guide was used to generate primary data. The research tool measured items such as trade and transport patterns, challenges associated with travelling within West Africa to trade and the extent of access to and use of ICT facilities to circumvent the challenges. Basic personal information such as age, sex, education, marital status, religious affiliation and ethnicity of respondents were also captured. These then became the major themes that guided the analyses of this paper. The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS 18 software.

The major analyses performed were descriptive statistics and Odds Ratio which we calculated using the Forced Entry Method in logistic regression.

In-depth interview was employed in certain instances to have a deeper understanding of their challenges and to gain more insight into the lives of the traders. The interviews were all conducted in the marketplace as this allowed room to also ask non-prepared questions that arose from the observation of the market, the traders and the trading environment. The qualitative interviews were analyzed using the thematic narrative analysis and presented as direct quotes.

Findings

Overview of survey respondents

Table 2 provides a general overview of survey respondents. Majority of the respondents (74.2%) were females. This may not be too surprising because many informal traders in Ghanaian traditional market spaces are women (Wrigley-Asante, 2013). In addition, even though the exact number of informal cross-border traders is not known, it is argued that the majority of them are women. In terms of the educational level of the respondents, the majority of respondents representing 41.9% of male and 53.9% of female have not attained any formal education. This is followed by those who have attained basic education representing 35.5% of male and 29.2% of female respondents. About 6.5% males as compared to 12.4% of the female respondents have second cycle education. Again, 16.1% males as compared to 4.5% of females have attained tertiary education. This shows that more females are likely to have secondary education as their highest educational level whilst males were more likely to have tertiary education as their highest. This may also have implications for accessing ICTs for trading. These issues have been discussed in the analysis section of the paper. In terms of age distribution, most males (29%) are within the age brackets of 41 and 50 years while a majority of females (33.7%) are within the age ranges of 31 and 40 years. The implication of this finding is that most of the informal traders who travel to neighbouring West African countries from Ghana are within the active working age.

A greater percentage of the male (61.3%) and female (60.7%) respondents were married. This is followed by those who were single representing 12.9% and 14.6% of the males and females respectively. Male respondents who were widowed and those who were divorced were 6.5% and 5.5%

respectively. Similarly, female respondents who were in the widowed and divorced category represented 6.5% and 5.6% respectively. For the religious affiliation of respondents, a greater percentage of respondents representing 77.4% of male and 84.3% of female respondents were Muslims while just a few are Christians representing 22.6% of males and 15.7% of females. This can be attributed to the fact that Nima is dominated by the Islam religion which is approximated to be about 59% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that the market is more likely to be dominated by Muslims. Out of the four ethnic groups, the Northern extract which represent all the ethnic groups in the northern divide of Ghana, constitute the highest number of male and female respondents with the percentages of 61.3 and 60.7 respectively. With regards to the other ethnic groups, i.e. the Akan, Ga and Ewe, about 22.6%, 9.7% and 6.5% of male respondents make up these groups respectively whilst the female respondents also constitute 21.3% of Ewes, 12.4% of Akans and 5.6% of Gas.

Table 2: Background characteristics of respondents

Source: Field survey, 2017 (Note: Figures in brackets are in percentages)

Variable	Male	Female	Total observed
<i>Gender</i>	31 (25.8)	89(74.2)	120
<i>Education</i>			
No formal	13(4.9)	48(53.9)	61
Basic	11(35.5)	26(29.2)	37
Second cycle	2(6.5)	11(12.4)	13
Tertiary	5(16.1)	4(4.5)	9
<i>Age groups</i>			
20-30 years	2(6.5)	10(11.2)	12
31-40 years	7(22.6)	30(33.7)	37
41-50 years	9(29.0)	27(30.3)	36
51-60 years	8(25.8)	19(21.3)	27
Above 60 years	5(16.1)	3(3.4)	8
<i>Marital status</i>			
Married	19(61.3)	51(57.3)	70

Co-habitants	3(9.7)	7(7.9)	10
Separated	1(3.2)	8(9.0)	9
Divorced	2(6.5)	5(5.6)	7
Widowed	2(6.5)	5(5.6)	7
Single	4(12.9)	13(14.6)	17
<i>Religion</i>			
Christian	7(22.6)	14(15.7)	21
Muslim	24(77.4)	75(84.3)	99
<i>Ethnicity</i>			
Ewe	2(6.5)	19(21.3)	21
Akan	7(22.6)	11(12.4)	18
Ga	3(9.7)	5(5.6)	8
Northern extract	19(61.3)	54(60.7)	73

Travel patterns and challenges with on-road transportation

The major destination countries for both males and females were Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Niger. On average, respondents have been engaged in the informal cross-border trading activities for at least 12 years. Trading has predominantly been through on-road transportation, with about 98.3% of respondents indicating that they normally travel by means of public transport on the road. Only one respondent (a male) indicated air transport as the major means of traveling within the sub-region yet travels by road occasionally.

Using on-road transportation to trade is, however, saddled with many challenges (Table 3). Indeed, both male and female respondents face similar challenges with the major challenge, being customs and immigration checks at the various points of entry as reported by both male (81%) and female (79.7%) traders.

Table 3: Challenges faced by informal sector traders with on-road transportation by sex of responders (multiple responses)

CHALLENGES	Male (N=31)		Female (N=89)		Total (N=120)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Customs and Immigration checks	25	81%	71	79.7%	96	80%
Theft and robbery cases	12	38.7%	40	45.0%	52	43.3%
Long delays at transit points	9	29.0%	40	45.0%	49	41.0%
High transport cost	13	42.0%	32	36.0%	45	37.5%
Long delays at bus terminals	9	29.0%	20	22.5%	29	24.2%
Language barrier	5	16.1%	14	15.7%	19	15.8%
Road traffic accidents	7	22.6%	7	7.9%	14	11.7%
Availability of vehicle	4	12.9%	9	10.1%	13	10.8%
Perishability of goods	5	16.1%	7	7.9%	12	10.0%

Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Respondents lamented about the activities of these officials which often causes undue delays as a result of the numerous border checks at transit points. This in-turn affects the goods that the traders convey with those who deal in perishable goods the worst affected. Subsequently, their profit margins are affected as explained as follows:

The major problem we have with our business is the three major customs check points on the road. After paying the duties, the officers still demand money on the road of these checkpoints we pay money...the customs officials charge us depending on the quantity of the items. Apart from the customs service and the police, there are also the tax forces that disturb us a lot on the way. They search us and take money from us as well (A 47-year-old woman who has been trading for almost 20 years).

The policemen on the road are preventing theft and crime issues that we encounter but the demand for money is too much. Now by the time we get to Accra with the onions, almost all the profit we intended to make is finished and we don't have any option than to

transfer all those monies collected by the police to customers (A 61-year-old man who has been trading for over 30 years).

Whilst both males and females face similar challenges on the road, it appeared the females were more vulnerable as more of them than males reported of undue delays and the related challenges. This creates a sense of insecurity amongst women particularly the fear of being attacked by robbers. Moreover, since more females than males deal in perishable goods, the burden of disposing of goods and re-investing into the business quickly was a major source of worry for many of the women as explained by a 50-year-old woman:

The Borders close at 6pm and so when we get to the borders after 6 pm, we will have to wait till the following day in order to cross. When this happens, we wait and sleep at the border by our goods. This is what frightens us a lot because when one is not careful, this is when your goods could be hijacked by some of the robbers, it's very scary and we can't sleep at all, we think of our safety and our goods throughout the night till day when we cross the border (50 year old woman who has been trading for about 20 years).

This may also imply that women are often anxious about their lives and businesses, which is an indication of an emotional challenge. This became evident in the study as a most important factor contributing to the feelings of anxiety amongst women is the desire to reach home safely to attend to their left-behind children. A 36-year-old woman, for instance, explained that she was always anxious to get home because of her 2 children (10 and 8 years) that she had left behind in the care of a neighbour. The undue delay, however, frustrates and makes her emotionally unstable till she arrives home to see her children.

Men are not left out of the harassment process since they also suffer similar feat but the majority of the respondents confessed that women go through more harassments as compared to men. This implies that there are

differences which are related to the societal stereotypes about the two sexes as well as the types of goods that they traded in. For instance, a 50-year-old man explained that women are often harassed the more because the officials perceive them to be vulnerable as explained:

...yes they harass us too but not as compared to the women, you know many people think that women are weak and that is why they worry them so much. For us [men], we argue with them and make sure they don't cheat us abnormally so sometimes they are afraid. Also because the men mostly trade mostly in non-perishable goods, the harassment doesn't worry us so much because our goods will not spoil as compared to women's goods which may get rotten (A 50-year-old man who has been trading for over 20 years).

Thus whilst both sexes go through similar challenges there are differences which may also be due to the stereotypes about women's vulnerability and therefore taken advantage of unduly. Indeed, the women perceived themselves to be more vulnerable because they travelled frequently due to trading in perishable goods compared to men who, it was noted, tended to deal in less-perishable goods and travelled less frequently.

In fact, some of the women mentioned that apart from the customs service and the police, there were also other men who called themselves 'tax force', and '*disturbed them a lot on the way*' as explained by a 56-year-old woman. These men searched and often took money from the women even though they had paid monies to government officials, often custom officers. Fortunately, the emergence of ICTs has created opportunities for both sexes to address these challenges as discussed in the next section.

ICT Applications in Informal Cross-border Trading

Using the binary logistic regression to predict ICT use as a function of gender (as shown in Table 2), our study showed no statistically significant relationship between male and female informal traders with respect to ICT use. This implies that both men and women use ICT to transact their businesses. One of the major benefits of ICTs and that have impacted on

the businesses of the respondents is the benefit of trading “off the road”. A key benefit of the use of ICTs is a reduction in the frequency of travels as well as travelling with physical cash. Both male and female respondents no longer travelled long distances due to the use of ICTs. Indeed, the use of the mobile telephony system and its associated transfer of monies to suppliers in neighbouring countries appeared also to be the commonest mode of trading, especially amongst women. Women reported reducing the frequency of travels since goods could be sent to them through their agents whilst monies are sent to the supplier through transfer. In other instances, women no longer travelled with large sums of money since they could easily transfer monies through the mobile money transfers. A 56-year-old woman, for instance, explained that she had not travelled for the past four years yet her goods were constantly supplied to her intact since she sends monies to her supplier in Lagos, who in-turn transports her goods through an agent. Similarly a 50 year old man also reported his goods are always delivered to him without him travelling since he discusses with his business partner via internet and phone.

Improvement in communicating with suppliers and clients was another key benefit. Through the mobile telephony system, they have the ability to communicate with their suppliers and have foreknowledge of where to get their goods upon arrival. For instance, a 56-year-old woman explained as follows:

I call my merchants to find out whether there are goods before I leave Ghana and so I just spend about three days unlike in the past when there was no communication before I set off. During those times, I spend about a week moving from one market to the other looking for the goods.

This has subsequently reduced travel period and time in a sense. It also in a sense shows that ICTs are supporting the traders to improve on their businesses through better management of their businesses including assisting them in the viewing of items and their prices before purchase. Not only were traders content with the reduction in travel time but a major benefit that kept on recurring among the traders was the savings made on

the monies as a result of less encounter with robbers. This has, in turn, reduced the emotional stress which arises as a result of fear of being attacked as explained:

In the past, we carried all our monies, these days we carry very little amount of money with us and put the rest in our mobile money wallet when traveling and so we lose very little amount of money to thieves these days. I am so happy about that as I have stopped thinking and no more afraid (A 56-year-old woman who has been trading close to 30 years).

Access to the cell phone strengthens ties in existing trader networks and could also assist in initiating new relationships with customers. This was exhibited strongly by the male respondents who reported of positive benefits associated with the use of ICTs to conduct their businesses as explained by a 32-year-old man who has been trading for about 8 years:

I am able to communicate with my suppliers over the mobile phone and they immediately bring the onions from Burkina Faso. Therefore, my goods are always fresh and this has won me more clients...I sometimes give the goods to my loyal clients on credit basis and they also pay later via mobile money (A 32-year-old man who has been trading close to 8 years).

For both male and female traders, there are multiple benefits of the use of ICTs with economic factor as the major benefit. It is, however, very interesting to note that males, compared to females, are more likely to make use of the 'advanced' forms of ICT applications (Table 4). For instance, male traders had increased odds of 3.00; 2.27 and 2.25 respectively of using video conferencing, electronic banking and smartphone/tablet connected with internet facilities for their trading activities more than their female counterparts. On the other hand, males, compared to females, had decreased odds for using mobile phones (whether for calling or texting clients) as well as using the electronic

money transfer options in their informal trading activities. This simply means that female traders commonly use mobile phones to contact their respective suppliers and clients in the informal trading activities. Also, they prefer to put money in their mobile phone wallets for onwards transfer electronically to their suppliers and clients.

Table 4: Gendered patterns of ICT application in informal cross-border trading activities

ICT application types	Odds ratio
Video conferencing	3.00
Electronic banking	2.27
Smartphone/tablet & internet	2.25
Land line telephone	1.97
Computer& internet	1.94
Social media (WhatsApp; Facebook, YouTube)	1.49
Cell phone (texting)	0.86
Mobile money transfer	0.73
Cell phone (calling)	0.30

Reference category – female (1.00) Source: Fieldwork, 2017

Indeed, the majority of the women reported that they were comfortable with the use of mobile phones for making calls and sending monies through their mobile wallet. The use of social media and networking was totally unknown to most of these traders mainly due to the fact that, most of these trader are women who are not too acquainted to these modern way of life. With the exception of few men who have had some training in ICT through their educational institutions, all of the traders were oblivious to ever receiving any form of ICT training by any institution. Thus, male informal traders may have a competitive advantage over their female counterparts in terms of accessing the full benefits of ICT applications to reach a wider market base, for instance on social media or saving time and commuting cost through online banking.

The use of ICTs is, however, saddled with challenges with the key challenge being network or connectivity issues as reported by 51.8% males and 64% females. This makes communication with partners and

clients very difficult and hinders the smooth running of their businesses. The other most important challenge for the traders was the cost of data for communication which many women (63%) as compared to men (58.1%) felt that it was too expensive to purchase. However, men (45%) reported of internet fraud as a second key challenge. In spite of these challenges, both male and female respondents were satisfied with the use of ICTs for their trading activities. In fact, 45.2% males and 74.7% females reported satisfied in doing business with ICT.

Discussion

The main objective of this paper is to assess the extent to which the transport challenges associated with informal cross-border trading is being circumvented by the opportunities associated with cyberspace. It was found that both males and females traded frequently between Ghana and neighbouring countries such as Togo, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Benin, and Niger. The frequency of travelling is influenced by types of goods traded in and the length of time that one spends to dispose of goods but on average, those who deal in perishable goods were more likely to travel frequently than those who deal in non-perishable goods (Wrigley-Asante, 2013). Travelling by road is bedevilled with incessant ‘harassment’ by government officials where both official and unofficial payments are demanded from traders (Dupuy, 2007; Wrigley-Asante, 2013). Earlier studies on women traders in Ghana show that women in cross-border trading suffer psycho-social problems as a result of constant harassment of officials and uncertainties of losing their business capital (Wrigley-Asante, 2012).

Moreover, a combination of both productive and reproductive work of women often creates stresses for women compounding the psychosocial problems of women traders (Clark, 1999; Avotri and Walters, 2001). This factor could also be attributed to the lower literacy rates of women as compared to men and therefore not in the position to know exactly the actual fees to be paid and who to even pay monies to. Thus, there was the perception that it much easier to get such monies from women than men. Unfortunately, such situations create psycho-social challenges for women. This may also imply that women are often anxious about their lives and

businesses, which an indication of an emotional challenge. The process of globalization associated with ICTs is a beneficial process which affords these traders great opportunities to trade efficiently and to improve their lives (Huyer and Mitter, 2003).

Similar to Overa (2006), our data suggests that access to the cell phone strengthens ties in existing trader networks and could also assist in initiating new relationships with customers. Our data reveal the gendered pattern of ICT use in that while male traders have access to access to higher and complicated information technology applications for electronic banking, video conferencing and trading on social media platforms etc., most female informal traders are limited to only using their mobile phones for basic functions such as calling, texting and electronic transfer of funds. This shows the clear gender divide in the use of internet facilities, as has been found in prevailing studies (Nsibirano et al., 2012; Gurumurthy and Chami, 2014; Bailur and Masiero (2017). We concur with earlier studies (Mitter 2004; Suresh, 2011) that lower educational levels, language barrier, lack of skill and technical competencies, as well as patriarchy and the design of the technology may explain this unequal access to ICTs for informal trade. Indeed, in our data, it was revealed that more than half of the women respondents (54%) had no formal education. The implication is that many of these women were not likely to read the complex web pages which are predominantly in English and may also not have the skill and technical competencies to navigate these higher forms of technologies.

The data further suggests that the use of ICTs by these traders has its own challenges with the key challenge being network or connectivity issues as reported by 51.8% males and 64% females. In spite of these challenges, both male and female respondents were satisfied with the use of ICTs for their trading activities implying that more females reported satisfied than males with the major reason being the use of the telephony system, reduced frequency in travelling and travel time, with the most important reason being fewer attacks from robbers.

Conclusion

This study examined how informal cross-border traders are taking advantage of the information society and using ICTs to trade and the benefits thereof. The study revealed that trading has predominantly been through on-road transportation. Using on-road transportation to trade is, however, saddled with many challenges with the major challenge being customs and immigration checks which often lead to delays at the transit points. Thus, trading off-the-road through cyberspace is increasingly becoming popular amongst traders in spite of the challenges associated with ICTs. This is in line with Overa's observations a decade ago that revealed that through access to telecommunication services, particularly the use of phones, traders have the ability to provide better services to their customers and have comparative advantage over other traders. They are also able to organize their activities more efficiently, reduce transportation and transaction costs (Overa, 2006).

In spite of the growth in mobile phone and internet data subscriptions over the last two decades in Ghana, there are still geographical differences with better access for households in southern Ghana, in terms of ownership rates and use of landline telephones and computer facilities, a point earlier on highlighted by Overa (2006). Our study adds on to Overa's findings in the sense that it highlighted the gender variations with regards to access to mobile phones and internet facilities, with more males than females having access to such facilities. Thus, whilst this present study has shown that both male and female traders are taking advantage of the new ways of trading through the use of ICTs, males compared to females, were more likely to make use of the 'advanced' forms of ICT applications. While trading-off-the-road provides freedom from the friction of distance, it impacts negatively on what Hanson (1998: 248) refers to as the "materially disadvantaged groups". We, therefore, conclude that the gender gaps in relation to ICT access and usage has to be addressed considering the economic and psychosocial benefits they present compared to trading on-the-road. It is, therefore, imperative to address the educational gaps between men and women, so as to improve on the literacy levels of women. Most importantly, women in informal cross-border trading should be targeted and trained in the use of more sophisticated information

technologies so as to take full advantage of the benefits of trading off-the-road.

As in all studies, this paper has its own share of limitations. First of all, by relying on self-reported information from the informal traders, as opposed to actual participant observations by the authors, the quality of answers provided is based on the recollection abilities or otherwise of the survey respondents. Also, we analysed the quantitative data based on the sexes of the respondents, i.e. males versus females. In this way, we were able to highlight the general patterns observed between the sexes. By focusing on general patterns, however, we acknowledge that there are unique socio-economic differences even within the sexes that have been ignored. As has been cautioned in Asiedu (2012; cited in Bailur and Masiero, 2017: 94), “when gender issues are defined in terms of male/female, it is assumed that barriers to ICTs faced by women have to do largely with their gender rather than their gender intersecting with their class, ethnicity and social position.”

For instance, do informal women traders of a particular ethnic group and who are highly educated and are richer than their uneducated and poor counterparts have the same level of access to ICTs in their trading activities? Going forward, future analyses of the data should pay particular attention to this intra-gender variation in accessing ICTs for informal trading within the West African region.

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NEGOTIATING ENTRY INTO MARRIAGE: STRATEGIES OF GHANAIAAN WOMEN IN 'MARRIAGE-LIKE' PARTNERSHIPS

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Abstract

Scholars have identified various ways in which people negotiate entry into marriage, including child betrothal, arranged marriage, forced marriage, self-choice marriage and remarriage. This paper will focus on how couples in already 'marriage-like' arrangements or 'consensual unions' negotiate the conversion of their relationships to 'marriage proper'. Data for this paper comes from in-depth interviews with fourteen couples in consensual unions in urban Accra, Ghana. The interviews revealed that in response to cultural, social and religious influences, women, more than men, are likely to devise various strategies to convert their consensual unions into 'marriage proper'. Their partners, on the other hand, often assume a laidback attitude towards the union. However, in most cases the women's strategies did not produce the desired outcome.

Keywords: marriage-like partnership, consensual unions, mate selection, wifely-duties, sexual services

Introduction

Marriage remains one of the most fundamental and enduring institutions in almost all human societies. Though enduring, marriage as an institution is continuously under tremendous changes, including how it is contracted. The growing literature on marriage in Africa has been extensive on the several routes through which marriage is contracted in the African context. One of the earliest known ways of getting married has been through child betrothal, a practice which had been quite widespread several decades ago

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but on the decline in many societies (Mair, 1969; Mensch, Grant and Blanc, 2006; Laird, 2002; Paulme, 2003; Phillips, 2018). Child betrothal typically involves the engagement to marriage of a young girl to an adult man or sometimes of two children, a boy and a girl. Quite similar to child betrothal is arranged marriages which comes in many forms. In the situation where an arranged marriage is resisted by either one or both of the partners involved, one could be talking of a forced marriage. Walker (2012), indeed, argues that early or child marriage to a large extent can be equated to forced marriage in the sense that the girls in particular given out in marriage have very little say in the decision for them to get married and to whom. Child betrothal, arranged and forced marriages all have some commonalities when it comes to the issue of consent and free choice. Although Meekers (1992) has observed that among some people like the matrilineal Akan speaking Baoule of the Ivory Coast, there is some level of freedom of choice in child betrothal, in most other cases, free choice is absent. With these routes to marriage, therefore, women especially are often not involved in the negotiation process as their consent is often not sought. The incidence of such marriage arrangements, however, is over the years declining and giving way to autonomy in partner choice.

The autonomy in mate selection in African societies has been on the increase over the last few decades. The trend has been attributed to modernisation, education, urbanisation and globalisation (Anderson, 2007; Bishai & Grossbard, 2007; Nukunya, 2016; Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2007; Russel, 2003) This route to marriage, which is also described as 'love marriages', is often characterised by free will and mutual consent. Several studies have, therefore, shown that autonomy in mate selection is often associated with urbanites and the educated but not completely absent among rural dwellers or with those who have less education and exposure. Takyi and Broughton (2006), for instance found that educated women in Ghana were more likely to choose their partners for both first time marriages or remarriages as the case might be.

The ability to choose a marital partner, however, does not always end in marriage as the ultimate desired end. With child betrothal, arranged and forced marriages, there is almost nothing like premarital courtship, which

is intended to allow the would-be couple to get to know each other and make an informed decision on whether or not an actual marriage should be contracted. On the other hand, where individuals have the chance to freely choose a potential marriage partner, marriage is not always guaranteed, although it might be the wish of either one or both partners. In many cases, lovers would live either together or apart as a married couple when they have not completed any marriage rites and ceremonies, a practice described as cohabiting or consensual unions. These ‘marriage-like’ unions could function either as a prelude or a substitute to marriage (Posel and Rudwick, 2014a). Although a relationship may be intended to ultimately lead to marriage, sometimes that does not turn out to be the case. When this happens, the woman in particular, is thought to be in the most uncomfortable and unfavourable position for a number of reasons.

Consensual Unions: Cultural, Social and Religious Influences

Ghana is a multi-ethnic country with its urban spaces, especially the capital city of Accra, mostly ethnically mixed populations. The different ethnic groups in the country also have their unique arrangements concerning marriage. These cultural arrangements do not only involve the processes for marriage but also the implications of marriage for individuals and their offspring. Aside the cultural factor, there are also social and religious perspectives on marriage. A person’s attitude towards marriage, therefore, largely dwells on a matrix of these three and other less evident factors. Consequently, the position of the unmarried woman in a ‘marriage-like’ partnership arrangement in the Ghanaian context can be analysed from different angles. However, the influence of these factors on men and women differ in significant degrees. For instance, although in the Ghanaian society, both adult men and women are expected to get married and in the proper fashion, marriage for women is stressed more than that for men. The phallic competence and sexual supremacy of men in relation to women is emphasised more than their social status as husbands. Indeed, social norms of masculinity are sometimes expressed among other things in men’s ability to have multiple sexual partners (Adomako Ampofo and Boateng, 2007). The social construction of womanhood, on the other hand,

is tied very strongly to marriage and childbirth. The unmarried woman who has a child out of wedlock, however, still stands the chance of bearing the tag 'born one'. This is a derogatory label which presumes a woman with loose morals who had a child without a husband and has, therefore, become unattractive to men as wives. This notion is embedded in Ghanaian folklore, proverbs and music, both traditional and contemporary, and contributes to higher societal expectations and pressures on women to marry. Men, on the other hand, tend to experience very little, of such social reactions. This makes consensual union relationships, within the context of Ghana, more problematic for women, than for men.

The belief that women are more religious than men (Trzebiatowska & Bruce, 2002) pertains also in Ghana. Though the Ghanaian is described by Omenyo (2006) as *homo religiousus*, the Ghanaian woman probably appears to fit the description more. Leadership positions in religious circles are held mostly by men, but regular church attendance and higher participation in church activities is often associated with women. Both men and women may claim to be Christians but women are often more likely to report higher levels of participation in and commitment to church. As such, women are more likely to be responsive to religious teachings than their male counterparts. Christianity, like the other two major religions in Ghana – Islam and traditional – emphasises marriage as the proper route to family formation. Anything short of this is technically considered sinful. In many Christian denominations, therefore, a person in any intimate partnership other than marriage, such as a consensual union may be exempted from leadership roles, partaking in Holy Communion and even the baptism and naming of children born to partners in such a union. If women are more active participants in religious activities, then they are also more prone to being affected by the punishments or restrictions that being in a consensual union would attract.

The role of ethnicity in attitudes towards marriage can be explained with reference to the systems of inheritance and succession. Matrilineal and patrilineal descents are the two major lineage structures in Ghana. In both systems, being married or otherwise comes with their own cultural

implications. In traditional matrilineal societies for example, although marriage is considered as an ideal for women, there is also a lot of focus on bearing children since children born to a woman belong to her lineage. They are entitled to inherit properties and succeed in their matri-lineage. It is in line with this that being in a consensual union in matrilineal societies is not necessarily frowned upon. This is basically because marriage is not a requirement for the recruitment of a woman's offspring into her lineage. What is considered critical, however, is for a child's father to accept responsibility for them and demonstrate that by naming the child. From this perspective, therefore, a matrilineal woman in a consensual union is not expected to be too bothered about her relationship status so far as the lineage principles of inheritance and succession are considered (Fortes, 1950).

The situation is different for patrilineal societies, where marriage for a man is crucial for his ability to lay claim to children he has with a woman. Patrilineal societies are by no means are a homogeneous group. However, they have more in common than what differentiates them. In the case where a couple from a patrilineal society in a consensual union have children, the woman's family could deny the man the rights of fatherhood by not allowing him to name the children. The incidence of this is more common among the Krobo where children born out of wedlock are usually named by their maternal grandfather. When their father wishes to name and claim them as his children he is required to perform a rite known as the *la pomi* where he is expected present items including a sheep (Nyumuah, 1998). In both matrilineal and patrilineal groups, therefore, women appear to be in an advantageous position so far as access to offspring born in a consensual union is concerned.

Beyond all of these, a woman in a consensual union who desires marriage has to wait on her partner to initiate the marriage process. Traditionally, it is a man who together with his family goes to perform marriage rites for a woman he wishes to take for a wife. Stated differently, 'men marry women' not the other way around. This reality, therefore, puts a man in a position of power in relation to a woman. The place of a woman in a consensual union relative to that of a man, thus, appears disadvantageous.

The Present Study

Some studies on intimate relationships in Africa have suggested love charms and magic as one of the frequently utilised schemes by women to get their lovers to marry them or stay faithful to them (Groes-Green 2013, Tremearne, 2013). This, however, is not always the case. Against this background, this paper focuses on the strategies that women resort to in an attempt to get their relationships converted into marriage. The paper extends the argument beyond the ‘paranormal’ approach used by women to ensure the conversion of their relationships to marriage and points to some everyday experiences. The study was conducted in the multi-ethnic city of Accra. A total of fourteen cohabiting couples were purposively sampled. Through in-depth interviews primary data was collected and manually analysed. The relationships had lasted from between three years to twenty-four years. All but three of the couples had children together and the number of children ranged from one to seven. Three major themes emerged, which formed the basis for this paper. All research participants whose stories are presented are represented by pseudonyms. The results from the study revealed that in response to cultural, social and religious influences, women, more than men, are likely to devise various strategies to convert their consensual unions into ‘marriage proper’. The three main strategies are suspension of wifely duties, diligence in performing wifely duties and adopting a relaxed attitude. The men on the other hand, often assumed a laidback attitude towards the union. The study found that in most cases the women’s strategies did not produce the desired outcome.

Negotiating Marriage via Suspension of ‘Wifely’ Duties

The strategy most described by female participants in this study could be interpreted as the occasional suspension of the services they provided their partners as though they were wives. A key component of the working definition of a consensual union in this study is the fact that the partners involved ‘conduct themselves as married.’ For the most part, therefore, these women acted as wives in their unions. The roles of a married woman are largely similar in most parts of the world. These roles which have persisted over the years basically include domestic services such as

cooking, cleaning and sexual services. These are termed the rights in *uxorem* of the husband (Nukunya, 2003). Of these wifely roles, the women often chose to intentionally withdraw their sexual services.

Refusing their partners sex was the number one form of registering their displeasure with the status of their union and an attempt to ‘force’ their partners to take steps to properly marry them. For these women, they experienced varying degrees of pressure from their families, friends and church leaders to get married. Since there was very little they could do to end the pressure from the various pressure groups, their goal was to get their partners to marry them. One of such women was Nana Akua (29-year-old trader with 2 children). She explains:

What I do sometimes is that, I tell him I will not allow you to sleep with me because I’m not your wife...one night when I said I wasn’t going to allow him to sleep with me, he wanted to force me. I slapped him and he left me alone (laughs). Ah, isn’t it annoying? He wants to be enjoying something that he has not paid for...I’ve told him that very soon, I’ll not allow him again until he goes to complete the marriage rites, and I can do that.

Nana Akua’s strategy was shared by the other women in the study. According to them, they see sex in relationships is more crucial for men than it is for women. Ruth (38-year-old shopkeeper with 2 children) for instance, illustrates this point further in this way:

Have you realised that when a man’s wife dies, at most after a year, he gets married again? It’s not for any reason. It’s all because they are not able to stay without sex for a long time. But when a woman’s husband dies, sometimes the woman might be young but she won’t marry again. And she will be able to live without a man for the rest of her life, but men are not like that.

What Ruth is pointing to is a gendered difference in the sexualities of men and women whereby women seem to have repressed sexual desires as compared to men. This indicates why abstinence is more tolerable for women than for men. Several studies, particularly by feminist scholars, have sought to explain how and why such a tendency exists. In postcolonial Africa, sexuality, they argue has been a tool for subordinating women to men through the ways in which women's bodies are portrayed, how they are socialised and the actual policing of their bodies (Lewis, 2005; McFadden, 2003; Pereira, 2003). Pereira (2009:19) argues that 'women's lived relations of heterosexuality have to be understood against the background of a general acceptance of men's rights to have sexual access to women'. Although women have their own sexual desires and wants, these are often suppressed through societal and religious norms, making women more of passive actors in sexual relations, and men the active ones. In his book, *Weapons of the Weak*, Scott (1985) argued that where there is a relationship between two parties characterised by unequal power relations and exploitation, the relatively powerless group, as a form of rebellion may resort to some strategies, which he terms 'weapons of the weak'. "Foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson and sabotage" are some of these weapons (Scott, 1985:29). In the context of intimate relationships, denying a partner sex could function as a weapon by the 'weaker' partner as a form of resistance. In many cases, women think of this weapon as powerful enough to 'fight' men.

With this viewpoint about men, Nana Akua, Ruth and the others who shared such views resorted to the approach of denying their partners sex, hoping it will trigger their desired results. At the time of finalising this paper, however, this strategy had not yielded the outcomes these female participants wanted. In fact, for some of the men this move was the more reason they had refused to perform the customary marriage rites. That was the case for Alex, Nana Akua's partner. He indicated that the fact that Nana Akua sometimes denied him sex on the grounds that she was not his wife was a major reason that had discouraged him from proceeding from the 'knocking' stage (the traditional engagement rite) to finalising the marriage process. He had, however, not made this known to Nana Akua.

This shows a clear situation of the couple living in two different worlds within the single world of their consensual union.

In her bid to stop acting like the wife she was not, Awuradwoa (35-year-old toll collector with 3 children) carried out the strategy of the withdrawal of wifely duties in a different manner. From time to time, she moved out of the house in which she lived with her partner and the children. She did so with all three children and went to her mother's house which is in a nearby location. According to her, she once left the house for close to a month. This was how she explained the rationale behind her approach:

I want him to know that he can't always take me for a fool. I'm living with you (referring to her partner), and I do everything that a woman is supposed to do at home. Sometimes I even contribute to the chop money because at times what he gives me will not be enough. Eh, I do all that and just go and perform the marriage rites you don't want to do it. That is why I sometimes leave the house with the children so that he will know that he has to go and perform the rites. And my mother doesn't have any problem with me coming over to her house with the children.

Obviously, anytime she left the house with the children Awuradwoa did not have to perform any domestic or sexual duties for her partner. The message she wanted to send across was that if the man needed her to be acting as a wife to him, then he also had to do what was required of him in order to have a wife. According to her, anytime she left the house, her partner would come begging for her to return with the promise that he was going to start preparations towards the marriage rites. This, she said had happened on three occasions. Clearly, this strategy was not yielding any results. In Awuradwoa's own assessment, the success of her strategy was being impeded by two main factors. The first was the financial implications of moving away from her partner with their three children. This meant that the responsibility of feeding the children and herself was almost entirely her burden since her mother was not in the financial position to fend for her and her children. As an Accra Metropolitan

Assembly (AMA) toll collector, her income was barely enough to take care of herself and children.

The other impeding factor was a more disturbing one to her. She explained:

Anytime I move out of the house with the children, they start getting sick one after the other. The one who gets seriously sick most of the time is the middle one, Akua. She and her father were both born on the same day of the week which is Wednesday, so they have the same *kra da* (day born). So anytime I take her away from her father she will get very sick. When she gets sick too I have to stay at home and take care of her which also means that my income will be affected because they pay us commissions on the tickets we are able to give out so if I don't go then it means I can't get my money, do you understand?... But as soon as she goes back to her father, she'll start getting well.

What Awuradwoa is purporting in this narrative is that her daughter Akua gets sick when the spiritual connection between her and the father is interrupted. The spiritual bond between fathers and their children was explored by Fortes (1950) among the Ashanti. According to Fortes (1950), fathers are connected to their children first through their *kra* and *sunsum*. The *kra*, which is the spirit, is the source of life and destiny whilst the *sunsum* is the personal soul and embodies the personality. These two intangible but crucial components of a man were believed to be transmitted to his offspring and necessary for their well-being in life. Indeed, Fortes (1950) found that it was a strong belief among the Ashanti that once a father's *sunsum* for instance is withdrawn from a child, that child would not be able to prosper. It is for this reason that fathers are given the right to name their children since the belief is that it is through the naming that the spiritual connection is established although the *kra* and *sunsum* would have been transmitted at conception. A father's spiritual relevance in the lives of his children is not only upheld by the Ashanti but

by other groups. The belief is even re-echoed in some Christian religious circles.

Awuradwoa's assertion that her children do not do well when they are taken away from their father who has named all three of them could, therefore, be explained from this perspective. Her observation that the child with the same *kra da* as her father gets more seriously sick, compared to the others suggests a stronger bond between that daughter and her father. Nothing could be done to avert this trend except for her to be in the same space as her father. This reality, coupled with the financial implications of leaving her partner, according to her, are what make her yield to his pleas to return to him. Over the period of executing her 'moving out' strategy, therefore, no progress seemed to have been made in terms of the desired results.

Negotiating Marriage via Diligence in 'Wifely' Duties

Whilst some women thought that refusing to perform the roles of wives would be the push factor to get their partners to marry them, others thought non-verbal persuasion was necessary to achieve their desired end. This non-verbal persuasion found expression in the diligence performance of wifely duties. For these women, projecting themselves as 'wife material' was the sure way of convincing the men to consider converting the unions to marriage. Unlike their counterparts who sought to use rebellion as a way of getting power, this category of participants took a much sober position possibly out of fear that doing otherwise might completely get their partners disinterested marriage. Particularly within the African context, diligence in the performance of wifely duties has been taught as the way women can endear themselves to their husbands. This is often emphasised during traditional marriage ceremonies. Similar teachings abound within the religious circles of Christianity and Islam. HajGold (2017) for example explained that in Islam, the Prophet instructed that wives who diligently perform their duties of cooking, cleaning, taking care of their husbands particularly in terms of sexual satisfaction would earn the pleasure of their husbands which will earn them entry into Paradise upon their death.

HajGold (2017) also made reference to the Bible, the book of Proverbs chapter 31, regarding the responsibilities of the virtuous wife. The virtuous wife through the performance of her duties causes the heart of her husband to trust in her (verse 11) and also praise her (verse 28). Moreover, Colossians 3:18 also talks about wives being submissive to their husbands. For the three Christian female participants who chose to apply this principle in their unions, their aim was to convince their partners that they were worth marrying. Owusuaa (30-year-old unemployed woman with a child) explained:

You know the men, sometimes you have to be patient with them. If you are always disturbing them with the marriage issue that alone can even put them off. So it's all about patience. Then you make sure that you perform all your duties as a wife and even do more so that they will realize that if they should marry you they have not thrown their money away. But if every day 'when are you going to do it? When are you going to do it?' then sister, they won't even mind you...he will do it, it's just a matter of time.

What was particularly interesting about Owusuaa's situation was that she happened to have a partner (Yaw) who was planning to run off to another location just to avoid Owusuaa and the pressures that were coming from his family and church to marry her. This was yet another case of partners with two different expectations and assessments of a single union. While in her case, she had not received an assurance from Yaw that he was going to marry her, he is also not definite about not marrying her.

The Laissez-Faire Approach

Although this study emphasised that the majority of women wished for their unions to be converted into marriage, there was one category of women, who had adopted what could best be described as a laissez fair attitude towards their relationship. For them, they saw no need to act in any specific ways to persuade their partners to marry them. They were just living their lives but still with the hope of getting married. For these women, so far as marriage was concerned their fate rested with their

partners. They, thus, chose to simply wait for their partners to initiate the marriage process. Their attitude depicted what can be described as bland normalcy or a lack of initiative (Collins 2004). Agyeiwaa whose relationship had lasted 24 years and had produced seven children still kept her hope of marriage alive but explained that she did not take any steps to ensure that it happened. She explained her position this way:

...oh, but what can I do? We already have seven children, seven ooo! Is it now that I'm going to be fighting with him about the marriage? I don't even want the children to see anything like that going on. He [referring to her partner] knows what he's supposed to do because he's not a child. So I'm just watching him.

The length of Agyeiwaa's relationship and the number of children appeared to be the restraining factor. Over the years, she had resorted to talking her partner into performing the marriage rites. When it seemed not to be yielding any results, she decided to relax. That was not to say, however, that she had given up on marriage.

Naana (36-year-old unemployed woman with 4 children) was also in a similar situation. Her family had intervened in the union to prevent her partner Kwabena from naming any of their four children. On a personal level, however, she was not actively trying to convince him to perform the marriage rites, though she very much wanted him to do so. Like Agyeiwaa, she maintained that Kwabena, her partner, was fully aware of the customary marriage requirements. For her, the fact that the opportunity to name their children was dependent on whether or not he performed the rites should be the main motivating factor for him to perform the rites and not necessarily what she did as a person. Whilst she waited for the marriage, however, she also felt the need to deal with the issue of physical abuse which was quite frequent in the relationship. She described her approach to dealing with it as 'you do me, I do you.' This was how it worked, according to her:

You see I told you that sometimes he beats me with his hands and other times too with a belt. So I also decided that if he hasn't married me and I don't have anybody to report him to, I also had to do something. So some time ago, he beat me because he said I had gone to drink alcohol. I didn't say anything. I went to hire some land-guards I know to ambush him and beat him for me. As for land-guards, you don't have to give them anything, even if you give them something small for *akpeteshie* (local gin) they will do what you ask them to do for you. So they also beat him very well and as I speak to you he doesn't know that I was the one behind it. (Laughs)...He thinks he's the only one who is strong.

Nana resorted to the 'you do me, I do you' strategy, because the union was not 'marriage proper'. According to her if they had been properly married she would have adopted a different approach which is reporting him to his extended family members for their intervention.

Conclusion

This paper reveals that negotiating entry into marriage in consensual unions can be understood from the complex interplay between gender, socio-cultural and religious factors. The eagerness of women to have their unions converted to marriage for which reason they adapt various negotiating approaches can be appreciated in the context of this interaction. It is clear that a woman's stereotyped gender roles as wives turn out to be the tool that enables them to negotiate their desired social status of becoming actual wives. Their strategies of negotiating entry into marriage typically depict both an interruption and an enforcement of culturally defined roles for women in marital situations. That is, the withdrawal and intensification of wifely duties respectively. These schemes notwithstanding, marriage did not seem to be the priority for their partners. The fact that men, who in contrast to women, assume a laidback attitude to marriage could also be attributed to the fact that they tend not to receive much of the brunt of being in a consensual in the Ghanaian

society. This situation is a clear depiction of the popular saying that why pay for the cow, if you can get the milk for free!

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GIRLS' RE-ENTRY INTO SCHOOL AFTER PREGNANCY IN THE ASHIEDU KETEKE SUB-METRO DISTRICT, ACCRA: IMPLICATIONS FOR A SUBSTANTIVE POLICY

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Abstract

Government directive on student mothers' access to continued education and the Inclusive Education Policy are intended among other things to address issues of exclusion in education and also ensure educational attainment among pregnant students in Ghana. This paper explores some of the implementation issues that have arisen, especially constraints to school re-entry such as stigma and poverty; as well as challenges encountered by student mothers in Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro district in Accra. Personal in-depth interviews were conducted with 30 girls who were purposively sampled with 26 other key informants. The findings revealed that the inability of student mothers to re-integrate into formal education was due to constraints such as childcare responsibilities, poor economic background, and unsympathetic teachers and school mates. Further, the absence of specific guidelines, capacity development and sensitization to execute the provisions of the directive is constraining the smooth implementation of the directive. The preparation of a substantive policy with the required legal backing was suggested.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Student mother, Government directive, Re-entry constraints, School-based challenges.

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Introduction

Pregnancy among school girls constitutes a major constraint to the active involvement and participation of girls and women in education in developing countries (Eloundou-Enyegue, 2004). Girls who disengage from school due to pregnancy decrease their chances of receiving education that will open them up to opportunities for a better life. Obonyo and Thinguri (2015) have argued that girls who drop out of school as a result pregnancy tend to be vulnerable and exposed to child labour, transactional sex, early marriages and a continuous cycle of teenage pregnancies. Policy responses to the school girl pregnancy phenomenon in education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa have resulted in three main policy options namely: expulsion; re-entry; and continuation (Chilisa, 2002). In Ghana, the 1992 Constitution Article 25 (1a) and the Children's Act, 1998 both affirm the right to equal access to educational opportunities for all Ghanaian children including the girl child. Additionally, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5c) also encourages member countries including Ghana to adopt and strengthen policies to promote gender equality and empower women including girls.

In Ghana access to continued education by pregnant school girls is currently facilitated by a government directive that allows pregnant girls and student mothers to either continue or re-enter school after delivery or childbirth. The directive therefore seeks to ensure that the rights of pregnant students are not violated, as such actions affects performance and quality delivery of education. While the important role and potential benefits of the directive to the school re-integration process of pregnant school girls and student mothers in Ghana is acknowledged, it is not well known to what extent student mothers are taking advantage of this provision and the possible challenges encountered during implementation. Others have raised concerns about the situation. Adu-Gyamfi (2014) in a study on the impact of teenage pregnancy on primary education in Ghana has suggested the need for a specific or substantive policy for pregnant school girls and student mothers. FAWE Ghana (2015) has also noted the absence of an official and comprehensive national re-entry policy that ensures the re-integration of Ghanaian girls into school after pregnancy. This study therefore seeks to explore the reasons why student mothers are

not returning to school after delivery; to investigate the challenges faced by student mothers' who have returned to school; and to examine the government directive on pregnant girls' continuation or re-entry into school after pregnancy. This should provide input to any future efforts to develop a substantive policy for pregnant student education in Ghana.

Literature Review and Framework

With the advent of formal education teenage motherhood which was the norm in many societies became an obstruction to educational progress among girls. The phenomenon has been identified as one of the major reasons for girls' school dropout (Kaufman, 2001). According to Theron and Dunn (2006) child bearing responsibilities presents disruptions to the educational aspirations of young mothers and is responsible for many students mothers inability to return to school. A study in Tanzania by Uromi (2014) notes that some of the causal factors of school girl pregnancy include low socioeconomic status; socio-cultural beliefs and practices; financial challenges; lack of information about sexual matters and exposure among others. Other studies including Gyan (2013), and Adu-Gyamfi (2014) have also suggested factors such as mass media, breakdown of culture, self-esteem and forced unprotected sex are key contributory factors.

Education systems in most Sub-Saharan African countries, have pursued and instituted various policy responses to the school girl pregnancy phenomenon, namely: the exclusion; re-entry; and continuation policies. It has been found that once they get pregnant parents tend to become ambivalent about their daughters education, or, the girls become reluctant to go back and finish school. A study by Pricilah et al. (2014) revealed that student mothers discouraged their parents from assisting them in the school re-entry process. The study which examined the barriers to effective parental participation in teenage mothers' education in Kenya pointed to the unwillingness of student mothers to return to school as one of the major barriers that discouraged and prevented parental involvement in the education of their daughters. Madhavan and Thomas (2005) in an investigation on the impact of childbearing on schooling in South Africa found the availability of childcare support and socioeconomic status of

household as the key factors and conditions that facilitate student mother re-entry to school after childbirth.

The important role of childcare assistance in the re-entry process is further emphasized by Hubbard (2008). A study in Botswana on pregnancy related school dropout by Meeker & Ahmed (1999) pointed out parents' insistence that their daughters to work to support their children and this situation often decreased the mothers' chances of returning to school. Hubbard (2008) further adds that apart from childcare assistance, financial assistance is also critical to the re-entry process. The study also found that most student mothers belonged to large households or family sizes, ranging from 3 to 8 members. Most student mothers also did not receive any financial support from the fathers of their children. Low economic status of families was found to be responsible largely for the failure and inability of student mothers to return to school. Oyaro (2010) found stigmatization and discrimination seriously discouraged teenage mothers from continuing their education. This was confirmed by Sarah and Muthoni (2012) in their study on de-stigmatizing student mothers. They identified the sources of stigmatization to include teachers, parents, fellow students and the society. In Ghana pregnant students' access to continued education is guaranteed by a government directive which is operationalized by the Ghana Education Service (GES) in collaboration with Girls Education Unit (GEU). The directive prohibits the expulsion or punishment of school girls found to be pregnant whilst in school. It officially permits pregnant students to continue school insofar as they are able and willing to participate in academic work and encourage and guarantees pregnant students participation in national or final school examinations.

The study is based on the inclusive education theory based upon which a conceptual framework described as the discriminatory/inclusive access model for basic school student mothers was developed as shown below. The framework shows that in Ghana, pregnant school girls generally are faced with the option of either dropping out of school or continuing their education (figure 1). Based on the kinds of reactions they get from family and community student mothers either opts out or continues school after

childbirth. However, the pregnant schoolgirl who decides or opts to continue her education increases her chances of educational attainment and therefore moves from the zone of exclusion from education to that of inclusion.

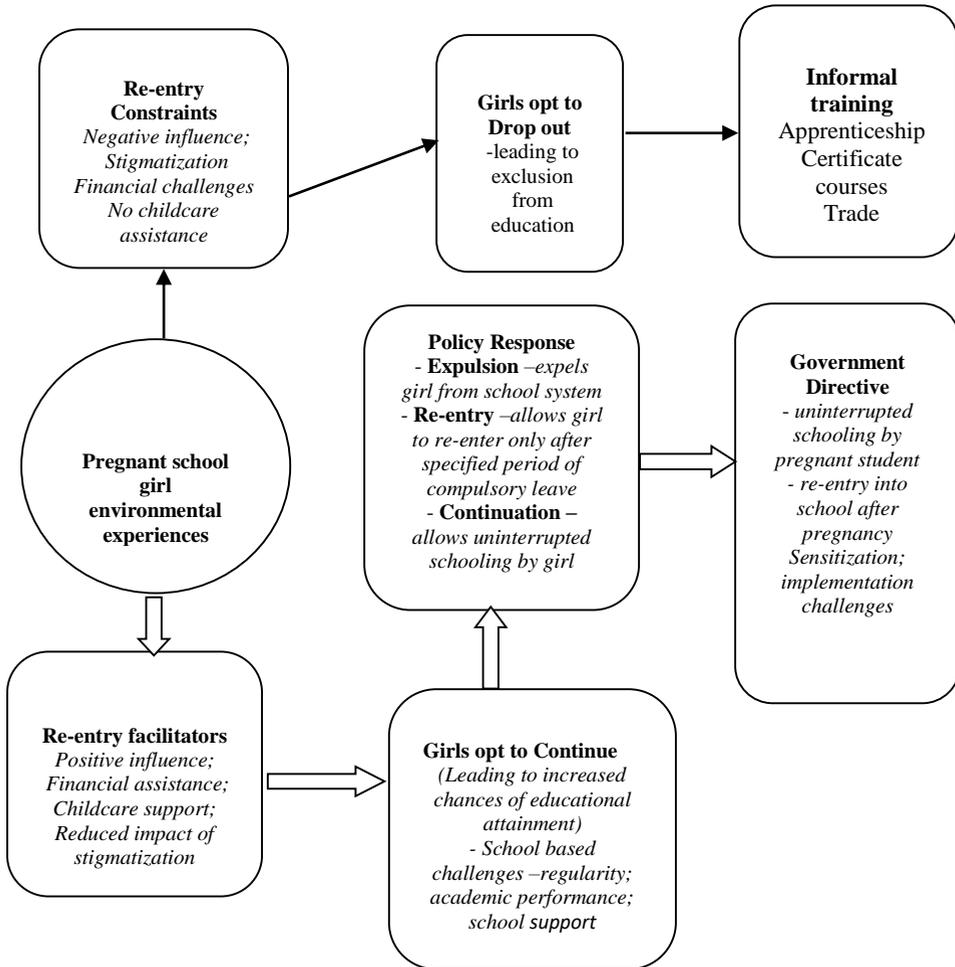


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the prospects, challenges and policy responses to pregnant students' education.

Method

Design

The study adopted a predominantly qualitative research approach given the exploratory nature of the research objectives. Qualitative research was seen to be most appropriate, as it is generally viewed to be useful in understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2009). But basic quantitative data was collected to provide information on the background of the student mothers in school and their school participation.

Study Context

The study was conducted in the Ashiedu Keteke Sub-Metro District in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The district is located in the Accra Metropolitan Area of the Greater Accra Region and consists of several communities. The indigenous inhabitants of these communities are the Ga people. But in addition other ethnic groups such as Akans, Ewes, Guans and Mossi-Dagomba have lived here for many generations (Quartey-Papafio, 2006). Though a significant proportion of the Ga elite have their roots here, today both indigenous and migrant residents of Ga mashie can be described as socially, economically and politically marginalized. They are mainly involved in fishing, fish mongering and petty trading. Many of them also use this as a dormitory community from where they go out to work elsewhere in Accra.

Sampling Approach

Participants in the study consisted of 30 girls in basic schools who dropped out of school due to pregnancy as well as those who have returned to school after childbirth: 10 school heads; 10 teachers; 5 parents; and one (1) official from the Ministry of Education (MOE). The choice and selection of the key informants was informed by the multi-dimensional nature of student mothers' challenges emanating from the school, family and the community. School heads and teachers were selected because they could provide information on pregnancy-related dropout, re-enrolment of student mothers as well as the challenges faced by re-entered student mothers. Parents and guardians of student mothers were included in the

study due to the useful information they could provide by virtue of their direct involvement in their daughters' condition whilst the MOE official represented the policy making arm of the government from where the girls school re-entry directive emanated. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Student mothers' between the ages of 14 – 20 years were identified from three main sources: the schools, communities and a health facility, all in the study area. The snowball sampling approach was used in the identification and selection of the student mothers and their parents. In all the basic schools visited student mothers who had returned to school were identified with the help of the school heads together with the girl-child coordinators in the schools and colleague students; whilst the student mothers who had not returned to school were identified in the communities with the assistance of focal persons, resident in the study area. Parents of the student mothers were also selected along with the student mothers in the communities visited.

Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data was gathered through field interviews. Prior to the interviews reconnaissance visits were made to the study area to seek both formal and verbal consent from the relevant institutions and the potential respondents. Interviews with the student mothers who had returned to school took place at an agreed location on the school compound whilst that of those who had not returned took place in the homes of the mothers. The parents of the student mothers were also interviewed in their homes. Interviews with the school heads and teachers were carried out in their offices during working hours. Interviews to elicit information on the directive were also conducted with an official from the Ministry of Education including other interactions with the Director of the Girls Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service. Each interview lasted between 30 – 45 minutes depending on how readily and openly the respondents answered the questions. The interviews were based on a semi-structured interview schedule with both open and closed ended questions and for better probing of key issues. An audio recorder was also used to capture data during the interviews.

Detailed notes were also taken with the help of the field assistant.

The qualitative data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis whilst Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software were used to generate basic descriptive statistics on the student mothers. Thematic analysis has been described as an approach used to identify, examine, describe and record patterns observed within a data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings and Discussion

The demographic characteristics and category of the primary respondents that participated in the study are presented in Table 1. The primary respondents of the study comprised of 30 respondents, including 23 student mothers who had not returned to school and 7 who had returned to school.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Primary Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage Round off %
Age	16	1	3.3
	17	8	26.7
	18	16	53.3
	19	4	13.3
	20	1	3.3
Ethnicity	Ga	11	36.7
	Akan	13	43.3
	Ewe	4	13.3
	Hausa	2	6.7
Religion	Christian	28	93.3
	Muslim	2	6.7
Residence	Akoto Lante	2	6.7
	Bukom	4	13.3
	Gbese	8	26.7
	Jamestown	14	46.7
	Sempe	2	6.7
Total		30	100

A majority of the girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy had not returned to school, suggesting that the phenomenon of school girl pregnancy can take a heavy toll on girl child education in the absence of well-planned interventions. Interaction with the respondents pointed to some of the causes of school girl pregnancies in the study area. Among these include peer pressure, prostitution, poverty, lack of parental control, ignorance of the adverse effect among others. This is consistent with the study in Tanzania by Uromi (2014) and the findings by Gyan (2013); and Adu-Gyamfi (2014). In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed to categorize and critically comment on the field data in line with the research objectives. Recurring themes and categories were generated, including three broad themes as follows: Re-entry constraints; ii) School based challenge; and iii) level of knowledge and effectiveness. The themes were further grouped into categories and analyzed in details in line with the study objectives: i) Why student mothers do not re-enter school; ii) Challenges faced by student mothers in School; and iii) Government directive on pregnant students education. Each of these is addressed separately below.

Why student mothers do not re-enter school

The focus of this objective was to explore the factors that hinder student mothers from continuing their education given the provisions of the directive to continue or return to school after childbirth. Under this objective environmental influences are seen as the independent variables and school re-entry is presented as the dependent variable. Thematic analysis centered on re-entry constraints and re-entry facilitators. In the first instance the re-entry constraint theme is further sub-divided into factors that prevent student mothers from returning to school after childbirth. These factors include: girls' negative attitudes and bad influence; challenges of childcare responsibilities; poor economic background or status; and social stigma (figure 2).

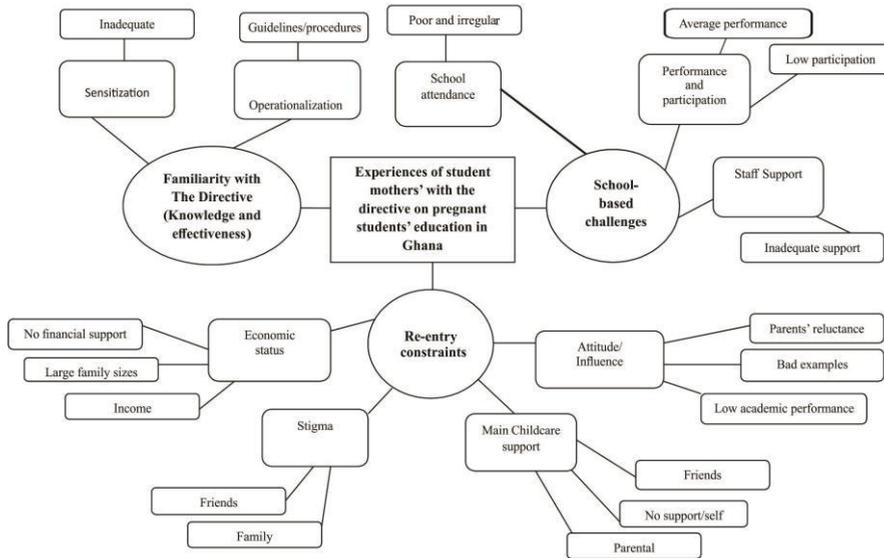


Figure 2: Thematic Analysis Chart showing emerging themes and sub-themes

Re-entry constraints

Negative attitudes and ad Influence

The study established that the decision of student mothers not to re-enter school was influenced by a multiplicity of factors. Key among them is their parents’ or guardians’ reluctance and loss of interest in their education. Parents insisted that their daughters stay in the house and work to earn income to help look after their children. This attitude of the parents discouraged them from reconsidering returning to school. A student mother has this to say: *“I can’t go to school; my mother is saying it is a waste, time and money so am there, maybe she is tired of me”* [SMNR 1, Jamestown].

A parent also said: “All of them give me trouble when they go to school, oh! four girls, this last one has also given birth, yes, she will look for work, because of the baby” [P1, Gbese].

The findings pointed to a generally low parental involvement in the education of their children including their daughters. Discouraging remarks and negative attitudes of parents particularly in relation to the education of their children is a reflection of the low importance that some parents attach to education. This is consistent with a study by Onyango, Kiolis & Nyambedha (2015) which emphasized the impact of negative attitudes and perceptions of parents among others on the re-entry of student mothers into school. The findings of the present study are, however, contrary to results of a study by Pricilah et al. (2014) which revealed that student mothers discouraged their parents from assisting them in the school re-entry process.

It was also found from this present study that student mothers’ decision to return to school was influenced by the bad examples of other out- of-school girls who did not want to go back to school. On whether low academic performance prior to pregnancy was a factor, 15 out of 23 student mothers answered in the affirmative. Though only 7 of them had actually gone back to school, majority of the respondents indicated their readiness to re-enter school but most of them did not seem to have a clear career goal beyond school. This finding is also shared by Grant and Hallman (2008) in a study that also notes a strong positive relationship between prior school performance and the likelihood of a student mother returning to school. This study therefore notes that negative attitudes and influence particularly from parents, bad examples set by their peers and low academic performance were important re-entry constrainers to student mothers’ likelihood of returning to school. According to NCSET (2006) parental participation in education remains one of the key contributors to school completion and educational attainment. It is imperative therefore that parent consciously and deliberately present a positive outlook about life to their daughters who become victims of teenage pregnancy by providing the necessary support for their educational success.

Challenges of childcare responsibilities

The phenomenon of teenage pregnancy and the subsequent childcare responsibilities seriously interfere with the affected girls' physical ability to participate school. This present study also revealed that childcare posed a challenge to the re-entry of student mothers into school. Five (5) out of 23 said they had no one to help them with childcare and therefore, did not have anybody with whom to leave their babies. Four (4) out of the 23 indicated receiving help from friends; and one said her 'partner' helped. One of the young mothers said: *"I do all the things, I bath her, feed her and all the other things, There is no one because I stay with a friend who also has baby, it is not easy"* [SMNR 3 Bukom].

The study further found that parental support was the main source of childcare assistance that student mothers received. Other sources of help identified include aunts and grandmothers. While a majority of student mothers acknowledged receiving parental support they indicated that they always bore a lot of the burden since their parents left the children with them when they had to go and work outside the home. These excerpts below illustrate these points. *"It is my grandma, who helps with the child, but she is old and not working, so I go and do a little selling to get some money, and I go with the child"*. [SMNR 5 Gbese].

The child is with my mother, she cares for the child, plays with him, and carries him on her back., But she leaves the house early to sell, so I have take care of him, with this situation I can't go to school[SMNR 2 Jamestown].

School heads and teachers also noted that the burden of childcare was highlighted as a challenge to girls' school re-entry after pregnancy. Four (4) out of 10 school heads attributed the situation to the attendant challenges associated with childcare as shown in the view below.

...Some of these girls stay with their grandmothers, who are at times sick and can't move. Some also single mothers who feel they should also struggle to survive. Not all of them get help from their families. [SH 1 Ayalolo 1 & 2 JHS]

The significance of childcare support in girls' return to school was corroborated by Madhavan and Thomas (2005) in an investigation on the impact of childbearing on schooling in South Africa and also by Hubbard (2008).

Social Stigma

Stigma has been described as the attitudes and beliefs that cause people to reject, avoid, or fear those they perceive as being different. This attitude of people including peers, teachers, community members, and family among others towards pregnant school girls and student mothers can potentially affect or reduce their confidence of re-entry into school. Several studies have noted the impact of stigmatization on the re-entry of pregnant student and student mother into school. Finding from this study revealed that stigmatization to some extent affected student mothers ability to return to school. Two (2) out of 23 student mothers indicated that they experienced negative and unpleasant comments and remarks from their parents; whilst 14 out of 23 pointed to taunting from friends and relations outside the community. A student mother residing in Sempe narrated:

...Oh yes! my mother at first talked small, my cousin also told me that I am of no use anymore, in this place we're ok people who don't come from here are the ones who talk and insults us...[SMNR 6 Sempe].

Teachers tend to share the view that stigma is undermining student mothers' confidence as shown below: "...sometimes they are not able to return because they feel their mates will laugh at them and look down upon them because maybe they are repeated ..." [TSCHE 3 Bishop Girls JHS].

The findings are in line with Oyaro's (2010) findings on the negative effects of stigmatization and discrimination on teenage mother's education. Sarah and Muthoni (2012) further confirmed this in a study (on de-stigmatizing student mothers) that identified sources of stigmatization including teachers, parents, fellow students and the society.

Poor economic status of family

Not surprisingly financial constraints stemming from poor family backgrounds emerged as one of the factors that prevented many of the student mothers from returning to school. Inhabitants in names of study areas are mainly fishermen and petty traders with the major ethnic group consisting of the Gas (Quartey-Papafio, 2006). When asked where they expected to receive financial support for their education, 9 out of 23 said their parents (referring to mothers, aunties, grandmothers and at times fathers) whilst 14 out of 23 pointed to friends outside the study area. Below are excerpts gathered from the interviews:

I sell at the market, the situation nowadays is not easy, but by the end of the day, I get something small to take care of her and her other brothers, money is everything, as for school fees again hmmm” [P3 Akoto Lante].

My mother said I should stop the school because when I go back there will be no one to help me continue, when my child grows a little I will look for work [SMNR 6 Jamestown].

Findings from the study also showed that some parents compelled their daughters to undertake income generating activities in order to support their children. This usually reduced the chances of the student mother returning to school as Meeker & Ahmed (1999) also found in Botswana.

Challenges faced by student mothers in school

The study sought to examine the challenges encountered by student mothers who return to school. Special attention is given to their school participation; academic performance; as well as school support. The main issue identified from interactions with the respondents was school based challenges. School based challenges facing student mothers who have returned to school are discussed under the following areas: i) school attendance and regularity; ii) academic performance and participation in school activities; and iii) school support.

School based challenges

School attendance and regularity

School attendance has been identified as a critical factor that has strong implications for the academic performance of a student. Lamdin (1996) notes in a research on truancy and absenteeism that students who attend school regularly compared to their frequently absent peers record higher academic performance. Among the many factors ascribed to student absenteeism include poor school climate; health concerns; transportation problems; and financial challenges among others (Teasley, 2004).

Table 2: Responses from teachers on school attendance

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Regular	0	0
2	Irregular	4	57.1
3	Poor	2	28..6
4	Very poor	1	14.3
Total		7	100

School heads and teachers in schools where student mothers returned to school after childbirth revealed that school attendance was a challenge among the student mothers. Responses as indicated in Table 2 showed that nearly 60 percent (57%) of teachers interviewed pointed to irregular attendance whilst 14.7 percent of them indicated that attendance was very poor. Even though low school attendance was also observed among regular students it was seen to be more common among student mothers. Most of the teachers indicated that the observed poor or irregular school attendance among the student mothers was due to the challenge of combining academic work with childcare responsibilities. As One teacher said: “...Her mother, first she was helping but now, the girl has to do everything, and she sells at Makola here, hmmm, she is not always in school”, [TSCH 3 Independence Avenue 2].

A student mother also narrated: “I have to wait to feed and bath my baby before coming, so I always, get to school after 7:00 am, sometimes I’m one hour late and at times I don’t come” [SMR 1 Jamestown].

Student mothers interviewed acknowledged relatively low academic performance due to various factors including lack of concentration, childcare responsibilities among others. Findings from this current study are similar to a study in Namibia by Hubbard (2008) that also pointed to the dual role schooling and parenting as factor to the poor attendance by student mothers. Chigona and Chetty (2008) also agree with this observation about the link between poor school attendance by student mothers and baby care demands or absence of other care givers.

4.2.1.2: Academic performance and participation in school activities

Table 3: Responses from Teachers on Academic performance

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	0	0
2	Good	1	14.3
3	Fair	5	71.4
4	Poor	1	14.3
Total		7	100

Over 70% of teachers interviewed reported average or fair academic performance among student mothers in their schools (Table 3). By all indications the student mothers who had returned to school had academic challenges. Many of them performed averagely academically compared to their regular peers prior to becoming pregnant. Grant and Hallman (2006) and Hof and Richters (1999) in s study have pointed to a possible relationship between poor school performance and teenage pregnancy. An exceptional case was however recollected by a teacher who said of a student mother:

oh she is good, she used to top the class, even now that she is back she is still doing well although she has fallen slightly. She is currently the president of the girls club and a lot of the students look up to her but I don't know what happened... [TSCH 2 Odartey Lamptey JHS]

It was also noted that most of the student mothers were reluctant to ask questions in class, a situation that was attributed to low confidence levels and self-esteem. They also experienced challenges with completing assignments on time compared to their regular peers. Most of the teachers commented that the majority of the student mothers did not actively engage themselves in school activities (Table 4).

Table 4: Responses from teachers on participation in extracurricular activities

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Good	1	14.3
2	Fair	6	85.7
3	Poor	0	0
Total		7	100

School support

The school environment is an important determinant and a critical factor to success in educational attainment, even though factors outside the school environment may also influence a student's likelihood of educational success. Structural and functional factors within the schools can influence the way in which student mothers educational needs are responded to. Most of the student mothers also indicated that deliberate plans and systems have not been put in place to address their challenges. This is also highlighted by a study by Mutombo and Mwenda (2010) in which they asserted that the needed support that student mothers require have not been adequately considered and provided for by the school system. The study also found out that challenges associated with the student mothers were addressed on *ad hoc* basis, a situation that was attributed to the absence of specific and documented guidelines for the implementation of the re-entry directive.

Government directive on pregnant student education

The study examined the views of respondents on the nature and effectiveness of the government directive on student mothers' re-entry.

Their level of knowledge about the directive and its effectiveness was closely analyzed under the theme of students' knowledge and perceptions about its effectiveness.

Level of knowledge and perceptions about effectiveness

The theme is further sub divided and discussed under the following sub themes: purpose and benefits; awareness and sensitization; and operationalizing the directive.

Purpose and benefits

Many of the respondents interviewed were of the view that the directive was needful and useful for pregnant students, their families and the nation in terms of girls' education and therefore were in support given the attendant benefits. Education officials generally understood that that the directive was given in line with the principle of the right to education for every child including girls, as captured in the 1992 Constitution and the FCUBE. It promotes the notion that education is vital for empowering women and their families and the wider society. One official further said:

The directive was important, and it was meant to also address the problems of girls becoming pregnant whilst in school. Girls' education is important to the government because of its role in the development. When we have an educated woman, chances are that they can affect their families positively [MOE 1].

One school head said:

...Look it's a good thing, hmmm as for this area, teenage pregnancy is a real problem and it looks normal my brother. I am parent and a teacher at heart, I will always go for putting them back to school, as for that [SH Amamomo JHS].

These views reflect UNICEF (2004) assertion on the vital role of female education in governance, development and the building of strong families and better child healthcare. Responses from teachers further pointed to a

support of the directive indicating that educating girls empowered them and enabled them to be self-reliant and independent. According to them equipping girls through education will help build their self-esteem and make them conscious of their rights. Based on the responses there seemed to be a general support for the directive.

Awareness and sensitization

While many acknowledged the important role and useful benefits of the provisions of the Directive, perceptions and views of respondents including student mothers, parents, school heads, teachers and the MOE Official generally revealed varied levels of awareness and sensitization about the directive as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Student mothers perception on parents' sensitization on the re-entry directive

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Sensitized	5	16.7
2	Somewhat sensitized	16	53.3
3	Unaware	9	30.0
Total		30	100

In assessing the level of sensitization among the respondents, perceptions of student mothers (who had returned to school and those who had not) as well as parents' sensitization on the re-entry directive were gathered given the critical role of parental involvement in school completion and educational attainment (NCSET, 2006).

A majority of the student mothers (53%) interviewed indicated that their parents rarely received sensitization on the re-entry directive, whilst 9 constituting 30% said their parents were not aware of the re-entry provisions (Table 5). Only about 17% of all the girls acknowledged that their parents were aware and had been sensitized on the directive. It can therefore be inferred among other factors that the reason why student mothers do not return to school after childbirth was also because parents had not been sufficiently sensitized on the purpose and benefits of the

provisions of the re-entry directive. Many of the respondents called for increased and frequent sensitization for parents and student mothers as well as made. A student mother narrated:

...me it's my mother that they told her, when they call her to my school to see the head and they told her. I mean the time that I was pregnant, at first my mother said will they pay your fees, so they have to tell people about it [SH 5 Amamomo JHS].

Responding to questions on how schools are sensitized on the re-entry directive, the MOE official indicated that the Ghana Education Services (GES) who are the key implementers of policies sensitized the schools through the regional education offices, through workshops and memoranda. The regional offices are then expected to communicate the information to the District Education offices. The district officers then disseminate the information to the supervisors or coordinators of the schools in the districts. There was agreement that sensitization must be done more often by the school heads in the schools and community focal persons or officers in the communities where the student mothers reside.

On how they were sensitized on the directive the school heads said that it was communicated to them through correspondence and in their meetings with their Circuit Supervisors (CS) who also receive information from the Accra Metro Education Directorate. The Directorate also receives information from the GES head office. Concerning how the directive was disseminated in their schools 2 out of 10 school heads said they discussed matters regarding adolescent reproductive health, sex education as well as issues regarding school girl pregnancy in their girl clubs meetings. According to some of the school heads interviewed the clubs are recognized key sensitization platforms used in some of the schools visited even though participation in the activities of the clubs was optional. Three (3) out ten (10) school heads indicated that they encouraged parents during their Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings to guide their wards in order not be victims of teenage pregnancy, while two (2) out of ten (10) school heads disseminated general information on sexual relationships and

the effects of pregnancy during school assemblies. School heads interviewed however admitted that they did not directly disseminate the information on the directive to students since they felt it had the potential of encouraging the practice of teenage pregnancy; but instead sensitized parents of girls who got pregnant whilst in school as well as the pregnant girl. School heads however generally added that they were also constrained because of the absence of specific guideline document or procedure that detailed how they needed to implement the strategy. It can therefore be inferred that sensitization of parents and student was inadequate.

When asked whether they were aware of the directive, the teachers interviewed acknowledged that information on the directive was disseminated to them in meetings with their school heads. Three (3) out ten (10) teachers however said girls' coordinators in their schools were responsible for sensitization of the students' particularly pregnant girls. Two (2) out of ten (10) teachers also said it was the duty of the guidance and counseling unit in the school. The study revealed from the responses that effective sensitization among the intended beneficiaries and stakeholders will require some clarity with regards to the details of the directive.

Operationalizing the directive

Responses from school heads and teachers revealed some practical challenges in terms of the implementation of the directive. The absence of clear documented guidelines or procedures that provided specific details for implementation of the directive was a major constraint that was frequently encountered by the school heads and teachers. The provision of such documented guidelines or procedures for implementation of the provisions of the directive will spell out clearly the roles and responsibilities of the key implementers and stakeholders such as parents, student mothers as well as the appropriate strategies and how specific situations should be handled. As one school head responded: "*Oh no we don't have any material, we handle the case as they occur, the Directive did not come with any document*" [SH 3].

The observed implementation challenges reported by respondents in this present study are consistent with findings of Obonyo and Thinguri (2015) study on Kenya's re-entry policy. The absence of clear and specific guidelines; limited access and awareness of the policy, negative community attitude towards pregnant girls stay in school among others were identified as constraints to the effective implementation of the policy. The study also found out how school heads and teachers handled the following: i) detecting pregnancy; ii) response upon detection; iii) leaving school to deliver; iv) absence from school - duration; and v) student mothers' return and retention in school.

On how they detected pregnancies among the school girls most school heads said they received information about pregnant girls from their teachers. Two (2) out of 10 teachers interviewed indicated they relied on their colleagues of the pregnant girls for information, 5 out of 10 teachers further said they discovered pregnancy by themselves and at times request for pregnancy test upon suspicion of pregnancy. Most school heads however pointed to challenges in keeping accurate records of the pregnancies as most cases are discovered after the girls' have aborted the pregnancies or dropped-out of school without the school heads' consent.

Responding to questions on the schools action upon discovering pregnancy cases, school heads said they invited the parents of the girl and discuss the options available to them in line with the re-entry directive, which allowed the girl to continue schooling until time of delivery and return to school after childbirth. Even though responses from the school heads pointed to the absence of a specific time for the pregnant girl to leave school for delivery, most school heads indicated that the girls were allowed to leave when they were due for delivery. The teachers admitted that the directive allowed for pregnant girls to continue schooling but failed to clarify the timelines. Regarding how long the student mother was expected to absent from school, school heads were unclear about the time frame, as the directive did not provide those details. This was therefore left at the discretion of the schools. Most school heads however indicated that the duration before re-entry depended entirely on the student mothers. Most teachers also said that staying away from school for a long period

can affect the likelihood of returning to school as well their academic performance. Asked how they handled student mothers who return to school after childbirth, some school heads indicated that were treated as regular or ordinary students and that there were no formal guidelines or procedures that helped them to address the potential challenges associated with student mothers who had returned to school.

Conclusion

The study established and concluded that the decision and inability of student mothers to re-integrate into formal education and achieve their educational aspirations were influenced to a large extent by the following factors: negative attitude and bad influence; challenges of childcare responsibilities; poor economic background or status; and social stigma. The investigations also concluded based on the findings on the school based challenges that most of student mothers lacked support in terms of childcare and this probably may have affected their regularity in class, academic performance and general participation in school activities. The study further noted and concluded that the absence of specific guidelines to effectively execute the provisions of the directive is constraining and hindering the smooth implementation of the directive.

One of the key recommendations emanating from the study is the development of policy guidelines or documented procedures to enhance effective implementation of the current re-entry directive in schools. Important issues that should be captured in the policy guideline include: strengthen of monitoring systems to enhance effective implementation of the directive; increased sensitization among the various stakeholders including parents and student mothers; capacity building for all the key implementers of the directive including school heads and teachers; and the introduction and adoption of a substantive re-entry policy. It is further suggested that a comprehensive quantitative study should be undertaken in order to establish a consistent, accurate and reliable statistics on the incidence of girls school re-entry as this present study only sought to examine the factors that influenced student mothers' inability to return to

school as well as the challenges encountered by those who re-entered school.

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***ABOAKYER:* A TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL IN DECLINE**

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Abstract

Over the last two decades, events have assumed increased significance in Ghana's tourism industry as new events are added every year. Meanwhile, centuries-old festivals such as *Aboakyer*, face decline even before a systematic framework for analysing events as tourism products is propounded. This study proposes the 'festivals-as-products' framework and applies that to investigate the underlying causes of the decline of *Aboakyer* and the chances of its revival, using qualitative data. Loss of habitat, protracted chieftaincy feud and demise of the *asafo* institution were the key causes. Two suggestions to stem the tide were either devising a new mode of appeasing the gods or using reared but still hunted game for the rituals. In either case, *Aboakyer*, literally, 'animal hunt,' loses its excitement but there still remains a festival to be celebrated.

Keywords: Ghana, Winneba, Traditional Festivals, Product, Decline

Introduction

Traditional festivals are of immense socio-cultural and economic significance in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, TFs generate the largest volume of domestic tourists (Akyeampong, 2008; Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008; Ministry of Tourism / Ghana Tourist Board, 1996), with a wide array of consequences for their respective communities. Among others, TFs provide opportunities for family gatherings and a forum for the mobilisation of resources for community development. As obtains around the globe, TFs contribute to the preservation and/or revival

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of ancient traditional practices (Mathieson & Wall, 1982) and to redistribution of incomes (Sharpley & Telfer, 2002; Archer, 1978).

Recent interest in traditional festivals as tourism resources in Ghana is manifested in diverse ways. First, are the revival of dormant festivals and the establishment of new ones. Since the mid-1980s when tourism was declared a priority sector by the Provisional National Defence Council Law 116 (1985), leading traditional festivals established include *Akwantukesse* (literally, the ‘great trek’) celebrated by the people of New Juabeng, Koforidua in the Eastern Region); *Akwantu-tenten* (i.e. the ‘long trek’), celebrated by the people of Akan-Buem, Nkwanta in the Oti Region; and *Kente* festival, celebrated by the people of Agortime-Kpetoe, Volta Region as the originators of the expensive, uniquely Ghanaian, hand-woven fabric which in times past was an exclusively royal garb. Next is the event management industry, spawned by the expanding number of events.

The country is currently witnessing a boom in event management companies as well as in Events Management as tertiary level academic programme. On its part, the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA, until 2011 it was Ghana Tourist Board), the national tourism organisation, has thrown in its weight by highlighting TFs in its promotional activities. As at 2012, the GTA had some 85 TFs in its publications (Mensah & Dei-Mensah, 2013). It has also been active in assisting with the instrumental in instituting festivals such as the para-gliding festival of Kwahu (Eastern Region), perhaps the nation’s leading crowd-puller currently.

Finally, a major off-shoot of the growing interest in TFs has been the large volume of scholarly works into festivals in Ghana. These include Akyeampong & Yankholmes, 2016; Amenumey & Amuquandoh, 2008; Ewusi, 2005; Amenumey, 2003; Odotei, 2002, Clarke-Ekong, 1997, 1995 and Wyllie, 1994. It is the interest by academia which prompted this paper. Gauged by the volume of scholarly works and attendees it attracts, the Aboakyer festival, celebrated by the Effutus of Winneba in the Central Region, was for a very long time one of the most popular traditional festivals in the country. Published works on Aboakyer include Ephirim-

Donkoh (2015), Ewusi (2005), Hagan (2000), Wyllie (1994), Anquandah (1988) and Sarpong (1976).

As with many others, these works have been written mostly from historical, heritage or anthropological perspectives though the touristic theme is the common thread running through them as the basis for community-wide or public celebration. Meanwhile, despite the significant pull they exert on discretionary travel, a framework for systematic assessment of TFs as tourism resources is yet to crystalize. Secondly, the centuries-old Aboakyer has in recent times lost its appeal. Besides declining patronage, some key cultural practices have been compromised. The two-fold objective of this study were, first, to propose a conceptual framework for analyzing TFs and apply a bit of it to investigate factors accounting for the decline in popularity and patronage of Aboakyer.

Conceptual Issues and Definitions

According to Middleton (1989: 373), “the concept of the ‘tourist product’ is central to understanding the meaning and practice of management in all sectors of the travel and tourism industry”. Middleton then goes on to cite Kotler’s (1984) definition of a ‘product’, which is reproduced verbatim here because it is considered an appropriate starting point as well as a useful conceptual basis for this paper. A product, in the view of Kotler (1984:463) is “anything that can be offered to the market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy want or need. It includes physical objects, services, persons, places, organisations and ideas”. Therefore, a traditional festival is a ‘product,’ it attracts people’s attention, people travel from far and near to witness, participate or simply ‘consume’ a traditional festival. A traditional festival satisfies the psychological and social needs of residents and attendees. For host communities, organisers, crew and performers, the economic benefits derived cannot be over-emphasised. Corporate sponsors are not charities; they consider the gains to be made before sponsoring a traditional festival. To all intents and purposes, therefore, traditional festivals are products in their own right and constitute a vital component of the ‘total tourist product’, that is when people undertake package or inclusive tours.

A festival is a special event which after years of continuous celebration has become identified with a given locality or community (Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell & Harris, 2011: 28). For the South Australian Tourism Commission (1997), a festival is a celebration of something the local community wishes to share and which involves the public as participants in the experience. For our purposes, a traditional festival combines elements in the two definitions and goes further to stress the role of traditional leadership as the initiators and chief celebrants. A traditional festival in Ghana is often identified with a traditional area, which can be described as "a group of communities with a common ancestry, dialect, cultural practices and traditional leadership through whom all other traditional sub-leaders derive their authority" (personal communications). For our purposes, an arbitrary distinction is made between 'ancient' and 'modern' traditional festivals; the former being those celebrated since time immemorial, e.g. *Aboakyer* and *Apuor* (Techiman), *Homowo* (Accra); while the latter are those instituted since the mid-1980s some of which have been mentioned above. Finally, traditional festivals have their exoteric components, marked by rituals often not meant for public consumption. Traditional festivals, invariably, are public celebrations and it is the public components that make them festival a tourism resources.

In project management terminology, a special event is described as a 'deliverable' (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnel, 2006). However, their peculiarities are such that traditional festivals do not fit the 'deliverable' designation. A traditional festival is organised and celebrated by a community led by the traditional leaders who initiate the festival and preside over it as the chief celebrants. A 'deliverable', on the other hand, connotes the handiwork or creation of an outsider, typically a consultant, tasked to 'deliver' a 'project' within a given timeframe. However, for traditional festivals, traditional leaders and *asafo* (traditional militia, watchdog groups who in ancient times protected or defended their respective communities until the advent of modern day police and military institutions) groups, the principal actors who plan, organise and 'deliver' a traditional festival, are not outsiders or consultants as implied in project management.

Festival-as-product Framework

The festival-as-product framework conceives a festival as an amalgam of processes, facets and attributes that need to be unpacked in order for one to better understand, appreciate and analyse the festival. These building blocks include historical origins, lifecycle stage, pre-festival preparations, product portfolio, promotion, sponsorship and impact (Fig. 1). Depending on the research objectives, the nature of relationship between two or more of the variables can be determined. For instance, product portfolio and sponsorship; life-cycle stage and visitor profile, etc. Thus, the framework is flexible, adaptable and should, above all, facilitate a scientific enquiry into traditional festivals, including comparative analyses of two or more traditional festivals.

In their oft-cited work, i.e. *Tourism: economic, physical and social impacts*, Mathieson and Wall (1982) identify three key elements that underpin the tourism phenomenon, namely the dynamic, static and consequential elements. The dynamic element is about the movement or travel to and from the destination; specific areas for enquiry here include search for information about the potential destination, travel party size, mode of travel, etc. The static element covers the stay or vacation and areas worth investigating include attractions visited, other activities undertaken, expenditure patterns, visitor profiling and satisfaction, etc. The consequential element, or simply stated, impacts, covers the economic, socio-cultural and environmental fall-outs of the visit. But while Mathieson and Wall's model, emphasizes demand factors, the current framework encapsulates both demand and supply elements.

- A- Main Festival parameter
- B- Expanded activity / unit
- C- External / macro elements

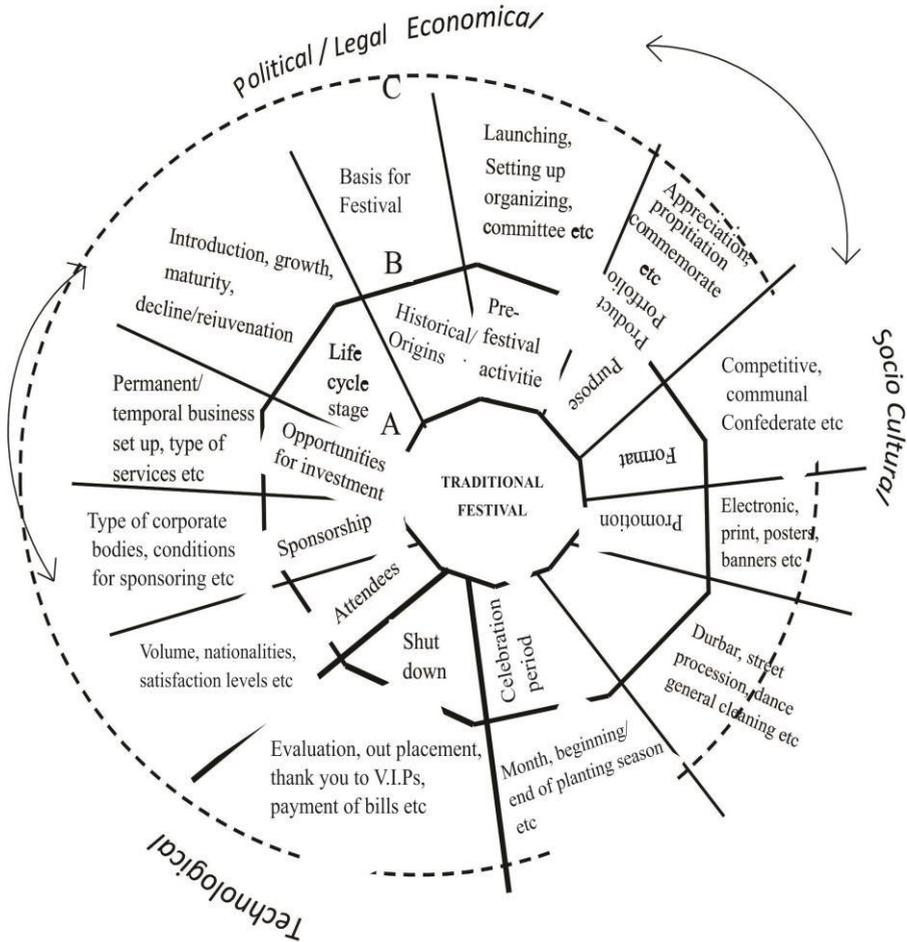


Fig.1: Selected Components of Festival-as-product framework (Source: Akyeampong, 2019)

Research Design and Data Collection

Construction of the festival-as-a-product was based on sheer intuition resulting from the author's experience as a teacher of hospitality and tourism management courses, including Event Management coupled by his years of active observation of TFs and other events in Ghana. For the second study objective, a descriptive, case study design was adopted, while qualitative techniques, specifically in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) were used for data collection. The case study approach was preferred over a cross-sectional study because of the uniqueness of the phenomenon being investigated (Sarantakos, 1998). Primary data was obtained from key informants, namely, leaders of the two *asafo* (traditional militia) groups as well as FGD participants. Two FGDs were organised with participants selected through snow-balling one group each from *Tuafo* and *Dentsefo* companies respectively. All interviews with the four *supis* (commanders of *asafo* or traditional militia), were conducted in their homes while the two FGDs were conducted at strongholds identified with the two *asafo* companies. That of the *Tuafo* had nine male participants while that of the *Dentsefo* had ten.

All interviews and FGDs were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were then content-analysed. This allowed the data to speak for itself. The transcripts were then returned to the interviewees and FGD participants to check and verify that the notes represented an accurate record of the interviews or discussions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In a couple of instances, some changes had to be made at the request of the interviewees/participants in order to capture what they insisted were a more accurate reflection of their sentiments. Quotes by informants are presented with the anonymous numbers assigned them as well as status and *asafo* company. In all, 23 people, aged between 35 and 71, participated in the study. Data collection took place between the 2nd and 24th of June 2016. The following have been used to identify the interviewees and FGD participants whose quotations were used: TUA – *Tuafo asafo* company member; DEN – *Dentsefo asafo* company member; SUP – *supi* or *asafo* commander; ORD – ordinary member of *asafo* company; FGD – FGD participant. Each identifier begins with the anonymous number.

Results and Discussion

Though the interviews and FGDs covered a wide spectrum of issues on *Aboakyer* festival; from history and cultural practices to changing dynamics and socio-economic impact, in the present paper, the focus was on aspects of the festival not so popular in the literature, i.e. the causes of decline and how to revive it. (For the historical account and associated cultural practices of *Aboakyer*, the reader is referred to Ephirim-Donkoh (2015), Ewusi (2005), Hagan (2000), Wyllie (1994), Anquandah (1988) and Sarpong (1976). A search on *Google* will throw up countless texts on *Aboakyer* or ‘deer hunt festival’ as it was known in colonial times (Meyerowitz, 1958; Claridge, 1951). Table 1, nevertheless, provides an overview of the key attributes of *Aboakyer*.

Table 1: An Overview of the Main Attributes/Facets of *Aboakyer* Festival

Age	At least three hundred years
Type	Propitiatory
Date	First Saturday of May
Format	Competitive, War-like
Product portfolio (core)	Parading of deities Hunting with bare hands for live game Grand durbar of chiefs and people Street procession of chiefs and elders of <i>asafo</i> companies
Product portfolio (secondary)	Clean-up campaign Regatta Fun games State dance
Impact	Economic Socio-cultural Environmental
Challenges	Loss of habitat (hunting grounds) Protracted chieftaincy feud Political interference

Key component(s)	ritualistic	None – non-traditional festival.
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Attendance and Participation Levels

On impressions about the *Aboakyer* of today compared to that of yesteryears, a *supi*, who had been in office since the early 1970s, had this to say:

Let me state categorically that the *Aboakyer* of today is a pale shadow of that of the 1960s. On participation, for example, people’s involvement in all the core customary activities, namely cultural practices i.e. the parading of deities on Friday afternoon, the hunt (for a live deer) on Saturday morning, the durbar of chiefs and people and the procession of *asafo* companies amidst drumming and dancing, has declined considerably. In fact, compared to the 1960s, I will estimate current participation levels at about 20%. (#002/SUP/DEN)

Corroborating the foregoing sentiments, another *asafo* commander posited that:

Though most first-time visitor get ecstatic about the festival, present-day celebrations do not compare in any way to those of 40 or 30 years ago. Modern day *Aboakyer* is not as colourful as that of my teenage days. I am, therefore, not surprised that most residents stay away from the festival these days. Participation in all departments of the festival has dwindled significantly. That is in spite of the increased media hype as well as sponsorship packages by corporate entities. Also worth mentioning is the mushrooming of drinking spots during the festival. (#001/SUP/TUA)

Thus, leading members of both *asafo* companies were in agreement that *Aboakyer* had lost its shine, and this fact is reflected in the significant reduction in attendance and participation in the core cultural practices.

This is not surprising given that the over 200-year old festival could not have maintained its popularity in perpetuity. As a product goes through its life-cycle; decline is bound to set in after growth and maturity (Cooper, 1989).

Recent Developments and Changes to Product Portfolio

The allusion to the emergence of new trends and activities triggered a follow-up enquiry which was also raised in the FGDs. Specifically, which new trends and practices had emerged in recent times? The *supi*'s response was as profound as it was insightful:

Up to the 1970s, there were only three channels of mass communications, namely the *gong-gong*, talking-drums and the sole state-owned radio station. The talking-drum was used during emergencies or when a message was meant for a privileged few who also usually understood that 'language'. The gong sent out general communications. Thus, once a date for the celebration of *Aboakyer* had been decided, the gong-gong beater went round delivering the message to residents. Note that in those days, there was no fixed date for celebrating the festival; that was the prerogative of the *Omanhen* (traditional overlord) and his elders. Often, the date was dependent on the availability of financial resources. Remember, in the strict sense, the *Omanhen*, literally, entreat the *asafo* companies to hunt for a live deer to be used to perform rituals. These days, the gong-gong has all but vanished and, even though the date –first Saturday of May –is fixed, FM stations do brisk business as they carry large doses of adverts in the lead up to the celebration. Adverts on television stations occur occasionally when corporate sponsors join the fray (#001/SUP/TUA).

Without any prompting, the *supi* introduced an equally revealing 'change' item. As he said,

Another key area of change is in the *asafo* dirges sung during *Aboakyer*. Among the key preparatory activities for the festival are the musical rehearsal sessions. A month or so to D-day, groups of young men were taught *asafo* songs. Often, the historical contexts of the dirges were provided. Consequently, the renditions were done with meaning. In modern times, *asafo* songs have been replaced with popular music and, in the few instances where they are attempted, only one familiar refrain is repeated over and over! (#001/SUP/TUA)

Contributing to the discussion on change, a middle-aged man, who tackled the issue from another angle, stated that:

A rather worrisome spectacle that has emerged in recent times is the kind of music that dominates the celebration. Usually, the Saturday afternoon procession of chiefs and *asafo* leaders is accompanied by traditional drumming and singing. While this has not changed, that vital traditional practice is losing grounds as it is now completely drowned by popular music blurring from giant loudspeakers deployed by drinking spots during the occasion. The situation is exacerbated by the several temporary drinking spots that ‘mushroom’ during the week. As if in a contest of the loudest sound, the combined outputs from the loudspeakers overwhelm the traditional renditions. (#017/ORD/DEN)

Another FGD participant whose views on new developments that deserved inclusion here was by a *supi* who asserted that:

Sponsorship by corporate entities is also a recent phenomenon. It must have started around the mid-1970s, led by brewery houses who also took advantage to do brisk business. Besides donation of their products to the traditional authorities, they were instrumental in promoting the festival on electronic media. Though the number of sponsors has declined over the years, it is the promotional

elements in sponsorship packages that take news on *Aboakyer* to homes and offices around the country. Traditional authorities alone could hardly afford such promotional campaign. Let me add that ordinary citizens (of Winneba) do not benefit directly from sponsorship packages because any accompanying merchandize are seldom enough to go round, anyway. (#004/SUP/DEN)

Thus, as with every facet of culture, *Aboakyer* has had to contend with change! Of concern to focal persons in the current study is the rise of popular music. Though played in the non-core product space has been inimical to the development of the festival because it overwhelms the traditional lyrics that accompany the procession of elders. That ‘worrisome’ trend is accentuated by the fact that while the phenomenon of temporary drinking spots adds to the outlets dishing out popular music, the singers of traditional dirges as well as participation in the elders’ procession was waning. Sponsorship was, nevertheless, a welcome item, especially as it contributes to the promotion of the festival.

Accounting for the Dwindling Participation

The next line of enquiry, which attracted a wide range of responses, concerned the causes of the decline in the appeal of *Aboakyer*. In the words of one *supi*:

I can give you 101 reasons for the dwindling fortunes of *Aboakyer* but let me dwell on just a couple of them. For me the foremost factor is the loss of habitat, specifically the thickets to the west of Winneba that constitute hunting grounds. Urban sprawl and economic activities such as stone quarrying and charcoal burning have completely decimated the hunting grounds. Without habitat it is impossible to find such mammals as deer, bush buck or antelope. The second reason is the protracted chieftaincy dispute. Because of the chieftaincy feud, either the *Omanhen* is prevented (by government) from presiding over the festival or one of the two *asafo* companies refuses to participate. In recent times, there is the strong perception

that the *asafo* companies are aligned to the two leading political parties. Depending on which one is in power, one *asafo* company is likely to stay away. (#001/SUP/TUA)

Throwing more light on the above, an elder from the other *asafo* company added that:

For me the reason is clear. Where are the hunting grounds? As of now *Tuafo asafo* company has no hunting grounds worth the name. About 40 years ago the two *asafo* companies could bring home as many as four animals. These days we struggle to get even one. In fact, there have been a couple of years during the last decade when no catch was made. (#002/SUP/DEN)

Touching on other challenges facing *Aboakyer*, a FGD participant stated that:

modernity, as manifested in classroom education and Christianity, is to blame for the dwindling fortunes of *Aboakyer*. These days, even people with mere basic education stay away from the core components of the festival. Specifically, the invocation and parading of deities, key activities undertaken as part of preparation towards the hunt, are viewed as heathen by some participants. The situation is worse with the so-called Christian. As a result, participation in these two vital elements of the festival has reduced drastically. Yet, I was told by my parents that in the olden days it was an honour to host an *asafo* deity and people went to great lengths to realise that honour. The sad reality, though, is that that enthusiasm with *Aboakyer* and other aspects of Effutu culture will be difficult, if not impossible, to revive because the forces of modernisation keep marching forward. (#008/ORD/DEN).

When pressed to dilate on the alleged clamour of their forebears to host deities, the participant did not mince words:

In those days, superstition was pervasive in society and any bad omen such as diseases, deaths, poor harvest and, indeed, any misfortune, personal or societal, was attributed to the disaffection of the gods. People resorted to charms and oracles for protection. In the Effutu State, the *asafo* groups sought the assistance of the gods not only for the protection of their members but also for successful hunt during *Aboakyer* because, as it obtains even now, it was a disgrace to come last in that annual contest. (#008/ORD/DEN)

Another FGD participant pointed to an extraneous variable militating against the ancient festival. According to him,

An equally critical challenge that has emerged in recent times is political interference. In 1998, for the first time in the annals of the festival, the *Omanhen* was banned by the government (National Democratic Congress or NDC) from performing its customary role in the festival. The current *Omanhen*, who was the victim, has continued to suffer that fate whenever the NDC was in government because he and his followers were perceived to be sympathisers of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) (the second leading party in the country). Consequently, these days, participation of the main *asafo* groups in *Aboakyer* is dependent, by and large by which party is in power. Thus, members of *Tuafo* company, will celebrate the festival when the NPP is in power and boycott it when the NDC takes over(#013/ORD/TUA).

When asked to expatiate on the genesis of the politicisation of the festival, the participant declared that:

It all started in the mid-1980s when a leading member of the *Dentsefo* was given a ministerial appointment in the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) (the military junta of the time). After the return to democratic rule (in January 1993), he continued to hold office under the NDC, the off-shoot of the PNDC and succeeded in bringing the head of state on a couple of occasions to witness *Aboakyer*. Somehow, people have since come to identify the NDC with the *Dentsefo* company and the Tuofo with the NPP. (#013/ORD/TUA)

Thus, depending on their origin, the myriad of challenges confronting *Aboakyer*, can be put into two categories: internal challenges (e. g. habitat loss, chieftaincy feud), and external ones (political interference, western education and Christianity). Whereas the external factors are outside their purview, the preservation or continued destruction of the hunting grounds are matters to be decided and acted upon by the chiefs and people of the Effutu State. Habitat loss deserves prioritisation in the scheme of things because the other militating factors are, by and large, attitudinal and could change for the better. The protracted chieftaincy dispute affects the peace and, thus, socio-economic development in the Effutu state (Hagan, 2000). Its negative consequences for *Aboakyer* could, similarly, be described as attitudinal because as, Hagan (2000) argues, citizens have taken entrenched positions which are now almost generational.

Another line of probing worth reporting was on how the challenges had manifested in the festival besides the drop in patronage. In other words, besides decline in attendance, what other changes have occurred to the festival's product portfolio that might be visible to older residents though not to a first-time visitor?

According to a FGD participant in his late 50s,

A very significant evidence of change in the fortunes of *Aboakyer* is the drastic qualitative and quantitative reduction in the catch made. As recently as the late 1970s, it was common for the two *asafo* companies to bring home

three or four animals each year. Usually, the *Dentsefo* group accounted for the larger number as well as the fatter ones. Instances of ‘no catch’ (by both sides) have become more frequent these days. The diminutive size of animals can also be mentioned. (#014/ORD/DEN)

When asked to explain why the *Dentsefo* group tended to make more catches, another participant elaborated as follows:

You see, it has to do with the location of the two hunting grounds. While that of the *Tuafo* is close to a settlement and a highway, that of *Dentsefo* is at the foot of Manko Hills and hemmed in by the Muni Lagoon. The latter is, therefore, relatively less disturbed. That place used to be so rich with game that in former times, the *Dentsefo* could afford to let go animals which were either pregnant or too young. (#010/ORD/DEN)

Still on the issue of perceptible changes to the festival, one *supi* was convinced that:

Aboakyer of today is a pale shadow of its former self. The intense rivalry that used to exist between the (two) *asafo* companies, especially in the lead up to the festival, has all but disappeared. In former times, hostilities could easily break out over the least misunderstanding. Costume, lyrics of a war song and inscriptions in a flag or some other insignia could be the offending item that would ignite a conflagration. The scale of destruction, injuries and occasionally deaths that ensued could be mind-boggling! These days one hardly observes even one-hundredth of that rivalry. Whether that is a change for the better is difficult to tell. (#015/ORD/TUA)

Expressing similar sentiments, a participant in the other FGD added that

What I miss most about Aboakyer of today is the custom of taunting. Usually, the group that came first in the hunting expedition was deemed the stronger, spiritually more powerful and more favoured by the gods. Thus, until the next festival, members exercised ‘bragging rights’. Members of the losing group had to endure jeering and teasing over all manner of domestic issues for a whole year. During my childhood days, it was common for children to become innocent victims if the parents belonged to different companies. In extreme cases, one could go without food during the festival as one’s mother directed one to the father for food because both child and dad belonged to the victorious group. (#008/ORD/DEN).

In an earlier interview, one *supi* had alluded to the waning practice of taunting, adding that:

The only element of taunting witnessed these days’ takes the form of accusations and counter-accusations with the losing group often accusing the other of purchasing instead of hunting for the animal. For me, there is an element of truth in that. This year, for example, they (i.e. the Tuafu) brought home a huge animal. Since they do not have any hunting grounds worth the name, from where could they have made such a catch? (#004/SUP/DEN).

Introducing another negative recent trend, a FGD participant posited that

A rather despicable spectacle in recent times is the large contingent of uniformed police personnel that descends on Winneba during the festival. From Friday morning to Sunday afternoon, the number of police officers that patrol the town is intimidating rather than assuring. In times past, we had a couple of policemen at vantage points to maintain law and order. These days, apparently because of the

chieftaincy dispute, the number of policemen is clearly frightening. (#018/ORD/DEN)

On his part, an FGD participant added that:

The tradition of singing war songs, in which heroic or tragic events of the asafo group are recounted, has all but disappeared. The number of indigenes who can sing such lyrics can be counted on the fingers. In the good-old days, with the approach of the festival, groups of young men were taught asafo songs by adult members. No such training takes place these days. Young people just parade the streets with one or two refrains, often derived from popular music. (#013/ORD/TUA).

Besides the sheer decline in attendance, it is obvious that a plethora of factors have conspired to dilute *Aboakyer* as a tourist product. Fortunately for the traditional authorities, such challenges are only known to the aged. Thus, the amazing presentations fed to modern-day visitors constitute a case of ‘staged-authenticity’ (Kithiia & Reily, 2016; Sheng, 2014; Chhabra, Healy & Sills, 2003). The final line of probing, therefore, sought to elicit from the key informants how to halt further deterioration of or revive *Aboakyer* –if possible!

One elder once categorical said that

I cannot fathom a revival of *Aboakyer* in the sense of a return to that of my childhood days. Let’s be realistic: where are the hunting grounds, to start with? Just as the festival evolved into the current format so, I think, there is an urgent need to devise a new mode of appeasing the gods and ancestors. I will suggest that the oracles be consulted so that instead of a hunt, an animal reared is sacrificed. That, certainly, will remove the excitement in the festival but, given the current realities, I can’t think of any other alternative. (#003/SUP/TUA)

An equally pessimistic counterpart from the other side offered the following compromise:

I am convinced that we now witness *Aboato* (game purchase) not *Aboakyer* (game hunt). If our brothers (i.e. *Tuafɔ*) will be humble enough to concede that they have squandered what they inherited from their ancestors, I will go with a model first put forward by a foreign investor. The business idea involved protecting a patch of the remaining hunting grounds (belonging to the *Dentsefo*) and stocking it with deer so that each year the certainty of a catch. The uncertain elements are which group will emerge first with a catch and when. (#002/SUP/DEN)

According to this *supi*, the idea was conceived around 2002 as part of a proposed 5-star hotel project by a Caribbean company. Unfortunately, the project did not see the light of day because the *Dentsefo asafo* group did not buy into the plan. The unspoken motive for their intransigence was to spite the present *Omanhen* through whom the foreign investors were seeking to gain access to the land.

Though proffered with a hint of sarcasm, the second suggestion for mitigating the situation appeared more plausible than the first which would amount to a proscription of *Aboakyer* for a new designation reflecting the new format.

Conclusion

This study opened with a conceptual framework proposed to bring focus to an area of enquiry marked by eclecticism. The approach subsequently applied to the current study demonstrated that the festival-as-product framework has the potential to facilitate a systematic analysis of festivals as tourism resources. The findings confirm the initial research proposition that *Aboakyer* festival is now a pale shadow of its former self. In product life-cycle terminology, the once leading festival in the Central Region, if not the entire country, is currently in the decline stage (Stark, 2011; Saaksvuori & Immonen, 2008) and, therefore, in need of ‘rejuvenation’. The decline is the result of a complex set of inter-related factors.

Consequently, the integrity of the core elements of the festival's product portfolio, i.e. hunting for game and the continued existence of asafo as a traditional institution, has been gravely undermined.

One can posit that seeds of decay of Aboakyer can be traced the very format of the festival. Reliance on ecological resources, i.e. deer and natural habitat, men at the festival was not sustainable, in the long term. In a country where state-owned nature reserves are being decimated by the day, preserving community wood-lots was always bound to be a tall order. Thus, the elements of modernity or cultural change (i.e. Christian ethos, education, urbanisation, etc.), have merely reinforced natural processes to hastened the decline of Aboakyer.

Similarly, the asafo institution, the key actors in the Aboakyer festival, responsible for all the core cultural practices (i.e. parading deities, hunting for game, singing war songs, the practice of taunting), was bound to crumble, given the source of its membership and the redundancy of its traditional role.

For policy, a major thesis emerging from the study is that just as some products and organisations fold up from time to time, so will some community festivals eventually go under, especially those like Aboakyer whose very formats and fortunes are inextricably tied to ecological resources.

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STRATEGIC ADAPTATION OF TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BIODIVERSITY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Dickson Adom¹

Abstract

Traditional festivals in Ghana are cultural events that are primarily organized to venerate the ancestors while remembering iconic events in the history of ethnic societies. However, due to the deleterious condition of the environment and its biodiversity resources, there is a great potential of tactically tailoring these traditional festivals to halt this wanton destruction while ensuring the sustainable development of biodiversity. This is especially important in local communities where illegal mining activities and deforestation has soared up recently in Ghana. Three traditional festivals in Ghana, namely, the *Opemso* festival, *Papa Nantwi* festival and the *Apoo* festival of some ethnic societies in Ghana were phenomenologically studied in a qualitative research approach with the aim of directly observing and carefully investigating into how the traditional festivals could be used as platforms for achieving environmental sustainability. Sixty-six purposive sampled respondents, some of whom were personally interviewed, while others were interviewed in a Focus Group Discussion were involved in the study. The research revealed after the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the accrued data that traditional festivals, though earmarked for the exhibitions of the rich culture of ethnic societies, they could be harnessed as avenues for the sustainable development of local communities. The study, therefore tasks environmentalists, foresters, biodiversity conservation planners and environmental development agencies to liaise

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with local communities in mapping out pragmatic environmental sustainability programs to bring to cessation, the environmental malfeasance in Ghana.

Keywords: Festivals, Tradition, Culture, Environment, Sustainable Development, Local Communities

Introduction

Traditional festivals serve as avenues for propagating the rich cultural heritage of local communities (O’Sullivan & Jackson, 2002). These societal events are primarily celebrated to advertise and reaffirm the place identities of local communities (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007) of which their cultural identities, thus, their norms, beliefs and moral values are vividly espoused during the occasion (Adom, 2016a). These cultural precepts of societies evident in the traditional festivals are particularly couched to sustainably develop the local communities through an enhancement of their venue infrastructures (Quin, 2006), reaffirming their traditional political systems (Odotei, 2002), improving their economic condition (Richards & Hall, 2000) and more importantly to this discussion, ensures the enhancement of the environment (O’Sullivan & Jackson, 2002) and protection of the biodiversity (Adom, 2016a). Bonye (2008) notes that traditional festivals are mostly linked to planting, harvesting and environmental cleansing basically aimed at honoring the ancestors as a bait for their blessings in return. Interestingly, Ngoma (2001) contends that traditional festivals help in revitalizing the indigenous knowledge which have been unjustly negated but are valuable tools for natural resource management. This might explain the often much emphasis placed on the development and conservation of the environment and its biodiversity resources. Of course, traditional festivals promote the ideologies linked to the preservation of the environment and its natural resources (Cudny, 2013).

Local people hold the strong belief that the ancestors visit their homeland during festivals to inspect the environment and its natural resources they left in the care of the present generation (Adom, 2016b). Therefore, it is

believed by many ethnic societies in Ghana that the ancestors punish or reward members of the society based on how judiciously or wantonly they used the biodiversity resources in their environment (Adom, Kquofi & Asante, 2016). Therefore, during the festival commemoration, environmentally friendly activities are undertaken such as tree planting exercises and removal of all forms of refuse and debris to develop their societies while appeasing their deities and ancestors (Asante, Adom & Arthur, 2017). Thus, Lyck, Long and Grige (2012) advise the management teams of festivals to use the event to sell the innovation and service aspects, one of which is to honor the ancestors through environmentally friendly activities.

The afore-mentioned accounts buttress the view of Fjell (2007) that festivals are being used in different ways today, aside from their traditional cultural values. Aside from their core purpose and ideas which is to promote the cultural heritage of the host communities, Lyck, Long and Grige (2012) add that festivals serve the interests of stakeholders. They serve as avenues for espousing the policies and developmental agenda of governments, as well as private and public organizations (Odotei, 2002). Bonye (2008) mentions that traditional festivals are now used as platforms by many societies whereby duty bearers are invited to communicate with the societal members on developmental issues.

However, it is sad that the great opportunities for sustainable development that traditional festivals offer remain unexploited by many organizations (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002). These organizations need to liaise with the local communities, especially, the festival organizing teams to intensify other developmental agenda, such as the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Fjell (2007) advises festival organizing teams to be open to adaptations if the traditional festivals they are organizing would be successful. These adaptations would make the traditional festivals earn the support of enterprising organizations. For instance, many institutions in charge of biodiversity and environmental protection would welcome such collaboration where their sustainable and conservatory ideals would be promoted through education and sensitization programs carried out during the festival occasion. The financial support of such institutions would help

in the survival of the festival and garnish it, as it were, to meet the taste of the contemporary society. Derrett (2003) reveals that traditional festivals are aimed at building communities through individual and collective efforts. Such individual and collective efforts on the part of societal members for activities such as tree planting, environmental cleansing activities and a ban on particular flora and fauna species are keen to the development and conservation of the biodiversity resources in the local communities.

Also, Falassi (1987) opines that there are competitions during festival occasions. These competitions can be tailored to suit the objectives of biodiversity development and conservation in the host communities of the festival. This shows that traditional festivals can be adapted to promote the development of biodiversity in the local regions. Ghana is a country with numerous local communities that hosts numerous traditional festivals. The various studies on traditional festivals have always emphasized their roles in maintaining the cultural heritage of local communities and promoting the beliefs and customs of local communities (Odotei, 2002), maintaining their place identities (Crespi-Vallbona & Richards, 2007), historical significance (Adom, 2016a) and as tourism avenues to boost local economies (O'Suvillan & Jackson, 2002).

The tenet of the study which is of novelty is finding ways of adapting the roles of traditional festivals to help in the sustainable development of the biodiversity of local communities through the promotion of the ideals of conservation and sustainability. This is very important in this age when Ghana is facing a massive decline in its biodiversity resources, with its high forest regions depreciating gradually in its land cover. Tutu, Ntiamoah-Baidu and Assuming-Brempong (1993 cited in Adom, 2016a) estimate about 4% of the GDP loss of Ghana's economy which is US\$54 billion to biodiversity depletion. This research is aimed at investigating the possibility of adapting three traditional festivals in Ghana, namely, the *Opemso* festival of the people of Anyinam Kokofu in the Ashanti Region, the *Apoo* festival of the people of Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region and the *Papa Nantwi* festival of the Asantes of Kumawu in the Ashanti Region. The study was driven by three research questions namely: (1)

What are the core purpose and the significance of the traditional festival? (2) What aspects of the traditional festival commemoration assist in the sustainable development of the environment and its biodiversity resources? And (3) How can the traditional festivals studied be adapted to promote the sustainable development of the biodiversity in the host local communities?

A thorough investigation into these questions would aid in finding proactive ways of harnessing the celebration of traditional festivals in the three local communities in promoting, sustaining and developing the rich biodiversity resources in the regions. This would serve as a potent model to streamline the other traditional festivals in Ghana with a catalyst objective of protecting Ghana's biodiversity which is facing a great threat of wanton depletion.

Methodology

The research is a cultural anthropological study carried out in three local communities in Ghana (Figure 1-3). The study was undertaken between November 2016 and July 2017 with the sole aim of investigating into how traditional festivals could be adapted for the sustainable development of biodiversity in the host communities. The study was driven in the qualitative approach because of its attribute of vividly describing and comprehending phenomena in their natural settings from the perspectives of respondents who have experienced the phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). This research approach was seen as very appropriate for the study because of its cultural and social context (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), thus, festival event that depicts the cultural experiences of the host communities.

The narrative and descriptive research methods were heavily used for soliciting the data for the research. The narrative approach aided in recording the personal lived experiences of the participants (Etherington, 2013) regarding the traditional festivals and how they have ensured the development of the biodiversity in the environments of the host communities. These narratives from the respondents concerning the traditional festivals were necessary to help the researcher to examine and

understand how the respondents constructed their meanings on how the festival events impacted on the environment in an exploratory, in-depth manner (Trahar, 2009). The systematic documentation of events in the descriptive research method (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012) was also used to record the festival events. It helped the researcher in discerning the beliefs and practices associated with the members of the festival host communities (Burns, 2000).

The principles in the phenomenological study that seeks to give an interpretive account of the beliefs and practices of a group of people (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) was utilized for this study to assist the researcher in understanding how the traditional beliefs held by the people influenced the way they treated the biodiversity resources in their environment. Sixty-six (66) purposively sampled respondents consisting of traditional authorities (Chiefs, queen mothers, traditional priests, Elders in the Traditional Councils of Techiman, Kumawu and Anyinam), the residents of the host communities and environmentalists from the Environmental Protection Agency formed the target population (Table 1). These categories of informants were selected deliberately because they were seen as possessing the unique characteristics that would generate the required data for answering the research questions for the study (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

A total of seven (7) Personal Interviews and twelve (12) Focus Group Discussion Interviews were conducted to generate the necessary data for the study. Personal interviews were organized for a section of the sample due to the secretive nature of some rituals and practices involved in the festival organization that were not to be disclosed publicly (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Yet, this sensitive data was seen by the researcher as indispensable in offering a thorough insight into the relevance of the traditional festival in promoting and protecting the biodiversity of the host communities. On the other hand, Focus Group Discussion Interviews were organized for the young and elderly residents in the various host communities after they were grouped into categories based on their age, experience and position they occupied in their respective communities. This form of interview was relevant for the study type because it aided the

members in the respective groups to feel free in giving out information regarding the traditional festivals while others served as prompters of very salient information resulting in very interesting and prolific discussions (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000).

To aid in vividly recording the events in the traditional festivals firsthand (Kumekpor, 2002), the researcher engaged in direct observations to visually glean all the relevant textual and visual data to effectively study the phenomena. A well-designed observation checklist with clear angles of observation aided in the taking note of the important features of the festivals that were directly related to the study objectives. Finally, the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used in analyzing the data generated from the study. This analytical tool helped the researcher in constructing meanings of the data from the direct perspectives of the informants (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Table 1: Breakdown of Interviewees involved in the Study

No.	Category of Interviewee	Total No. Selected	Details
1.	Traditional Authorities	6	Three (3) chiefs and three (3) queen mothers from the host communities (Anyinam, Kumawu and Techiman) were interviewed individually (Personal Interview).
2.	Elders in the Traditional Council	24	Eight (8) elders in each of the Traditional Councils (Anyinam, Kumawu and Techiman) were interviewed in Focus

			Group Discussion Interview sessions.
3.	Religious Officials	3	Three (3) traditional priests in the three host communities were interviewed privately.
4.	Elderly Residents (45 and above)	18	Six (6) elderly respondents from each of the three host communities were interviewed in Focus Group Discussion Interview sessions.
5.	Youth Residents (20 years -44 years)	9	Five youths from each of the three host communities were selected and interviewed in Focus Group Discussions Interview sessions.
6.	Environmentalists	6	Two Focus Group Discussion Interview sessions for six (6) purposively sampled workers at the Environmental Protection Agency.

Source: Author's Construct from the Field Survey, 2016

Results and Discussions

This section of the paper presents a brief overview of the geographical information about the host communities while presenting and discussing the findings from the study.

Brief Overview of Study Areas

The research was undertaken in three local communities in Ghana, namely, Anyinam-Kokofu and Kumawu Traditional Areas in the Ashanti Region as well as the Techiman Traditional Area in the Brong Ahafo Region.

Kumawu is a small town in the Sekyere Kumawu District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The people are mostly farmers, hunters and fishermen. It is estimated that about 81.8% are engaged in crop farming while the remaining percentage caters for the other occupations. The town is famed because of the Bomfobiri Wildlife Sanctuary and the Kumawu Traditional Palace that serve as tourist attraction sites because of their historical and cultural significance. They celebrate the *Papa Nantwi* festival annually to remember the exceptional bravery of their great ancestor, Nana Tweneboa Kodua I.



Figure 1: Map of Kumawu (Source: Google Maps)

Kokofu-Anyinam is a small town in the Bekwai Municipal District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The town is famed primarily because it is the birthplace of the first Asante king Osei Tutu I and also due to the abundance of the Onyina (*Ceiba pentandra*) tree in the jurisdiction. The place has a sacred place called the *Kwantakese* sacred grove. They commemorate the Opemso festival bi-annually to remember the birth of the Asante king Otumfuo Osei Tutu I.



Figure 2: Map of Kokofu-Anyinam (Source: Google Map)

Techiman is a popular town and the capital of the Techiman Municipal District in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The town is the leading marketing town in the Southern part of Ghana. The major agricultural product is the production of yam with an annual yam festival commemorated annually. Also, the popular *Apoo* traditional festival is commemorated every year to remember the bravery of Nana Akumfi Ameyaw I.



Figure 3: Map of Techiman (Source: Google Map)

The Core Purpose and Significance of the Traditional Festivals

The three traditional festivals selected for the study had their core purposes. These are varied, ranging from the commemoration of historic events, honoring of ancestors and for reviving as well as promoting the cultural traditions of the host communities.

Opemso Festival

The *Opemso* festival is held once every two years to remember the iconic event that happened in the lives of the Asantes in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Adom (2016) explains that the name of the festival, thus, *Opemso* (Courageous conqueror) is the exclusive title that was given to the first king of the Asante kingdom who was said to have taken the courageous stand to unite the seven Akan clans into the vibrant and powerful Asante kingdom. This was supported by the comment of the Anyinam-Kokofu chief who confidently said:

Our great ancestor and Lord was a valiant person who had no dread for all the enemies of the Asantes. His unique and cooperative spirit aided in uniting the various clans of the Akans to defeat all their enemies. He was the undeterred warrior who mobilized the Asantes with the *Wokum apem a apem beba* (If you kill a thousand, another thousand would come) ideology which has been the motto of the Asante kingdom till date. The great courage he had was a powerful source of inspiration for his subjects, who like him, demonstrated bravery and fought to establish the geographical confines of the Asante kingdom from the encroachment of the surrounding states and ethnic societies (TA-AN-PI, Personal Communication, 23/8/2016).

The traditional festival is commemorated to remember the birth of this great king in the history of the Asante kingdom. It is a remarkable event where all the chiefs in the Asante kingdom meet to recount the great conquering ability and courage of the first Asante king Otumfuo Osei Tutu

I. The youths in Kokofu-Anyinam disclosed to the researcher that they learn a lot of lessons about the rich cultural heritage of the Asantes anytime they commemorate the Opemso traditional festival. In a Focus Group Discussion interview, they said:

The traditional festival is a grand occasion where we learn of the history of our people and get in-depth knowledge and understanding about the cultural heritage of the Asantes. It makes us proud of our ethnic and place identity. We learn to tread the path of our great ancestors who fought to establish our kingdom so that we can equally protect the geographical confines of our people as well as the rich Asante culture for the future progeny (YOU-AN-FGD, Personal Communication, 24/9/2016).

The views of the youth informants correspond with the theoretical construct of Fjell (2007) who admitted that festivals are primarily organized by ethnic societies to beef up their community pride and place identity. The event is organized at the birthplace of the great king at Kokofu-Anyinam in the Ashanti Region. Oral tradition narrated by the elders in the Anyinam-Kokofu Traditional Council to the researcher indicated that the great leader of the Asantes was born in a thick forest under a big Onyina (*Ceiba pentandra*) tree. The researcher observed that the birth spot, its surrounding biodiversity species and environment constitutes a sacred gazette area where no one is supposed to enter and/or encroach. The sacred grove is called *Kwantakese* (The great path). It is believed by the people that the path to the birth spot of the Asante king is seen as great because it is the ancestors who led his mother Nana Gyamfuaa Manu Kutusi to give birth there. It is a taboo and a great offense for anyone to enter the thresholds of the grove to take any of the biodiversity resources. As a result, the area is full of rich great diversity of biological resources. Many of the important spiritual activities during the festival are performed at this sacred place. The numerous cultural activities are used to illustrate the historical episode of the events that systematically resulted in the birth of the great king.



Figure 4



Figure 5

Figures 4 & 5: The Flora Diversity in the *Kwantakese* Sacred Grove
Source: Photographed by the Researcher

Apoo Festival

The *Apoo* festival is a traditional festival commemorated by the people of Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. It is an eleven-day annual event that is used in remembering a very significant historic episode in the lives and culture of the people of Techiman who were then referred to as the Bono-Manso people. The researcher investigated why the festival was referred to as *Apoo*. The etymological meanings were given by the elders in the Traditional Council of Techiman who were interviewed in a Focus Group Discussion. They informed the researcher that:

The term *Apoo* is from the Bono word *po* which means to repudiate or reject something. *Apoo* gives a plural form of the repudiation, thus, of many people engaging in the act. It was first used by our great paramount chief Nana Akumfi Ameyaw I who asked a group of women who came to him at his residence during the festival eve whether they came to repudiate his actions (*Momepo me mu o!*). The women affirmatively responded that they came to him to repudiate the wrong things in the society. This is the whole essence

of the festival, thus, meant to repudiate publicly without any fights or whatsoever, the mistakes and bad actions of everyone, including those occupying key positions in the society through songs and maxims (ELD-TEC-FGD, Personal Communication, 7/8/2016).

Recounting the events that led to the celebration of the *Apoo* festival, the queen mother of Techiman in a personal interview gave a very extensive narration to the researcher. Important excerpts of the narration are presented below.

The traditional festival was as a result of a deadly plague that befell the people which through an oracle proved that it was the punishment from a great deity in Techiman called *Sipe* who hated animosities harbored in one's heart against his/her fellow. Thus, many people who held wicked thoughts about their neighbours, particularly the chief were mysteriously killed by the deity. Thus, to cause a cessation of the deadly plague, the people needed to expose the wrong deeds of their society members publicly. Thus, the then paramount chief, Nana Akumfi Ameyaw I, instituted the *Apoo* festival so that the members of the community could freely voice out the detestable acts of their neighbours including those occupying high positions in the society publicly without any accusations or penalties. However, the act was to be done in a dignified and respectable manner. Therefore, the wrong acts of one's neighbor are chanted using songs and proverbs publicly at the vicinity of the culprit so that s/he would know and change his/her wrong course. The festival, thus, effectively arrested the dead plague on the people since they maintained their peace with the *Sipe* deity. Every year, eleven days are allotted for members of the Techiman community, both the ordinary and the privileged in the society, to freely voice out their grievances and bad acts of people in a democratic manner for immediate redress. The

traditional festival has sustained and enhanced the unity in the Techiman society. This unity is seen especially between the chief and the members of his Traditional Council and his subjects (QU-TEC-PI, Personal Communication, 5/8/2016).

The core objective of the *Apoo* traditional festival which is an event commemorated to ensure peace and unity which are pinnacles of society integration and cohesion agrees with the theoretical constructs of festivals by Adom (2016a). He admitted that traditional festivals ensure ‘social cohesion within families, between families and the entire society as a whole’ (p. 13). In fact, various individuals and groups who chanted and paraded on the streets of Techiman during the traditional *Apoo* festival were observed. Various songs that were fused with many proverbial sayings were carefully selected by the people to expose the bad attitudes of members of the society including the paramount chief. Many of these groups walked directly to the houses, workplaces and palaces of the culprits of the wrongdoings with the aim of disclosing those disturbing acts to them.

Figure 6





Figure 7

Figure 6 & 7: Groups walking in the streets chanting songs and proverbs as they head towards the chief's palace to expose his actions that the members of the society detests (Source: Photographed by the researcher).

Also, the researcher observed that many of these dancers and chanters were dressed in anonymity fashion while some wore masks. The researcher inquired the reasons behind that dress code. He was reliably informed by the residents that:

The dress code is just a mimicking of how our ancestors dressed during the *Apoo* traditional festival in times past. Oral tradition told us indicated that our early forebears feared of being found out and/or executed when they went to the chief's palace to voice out their grievances of his bad deeds. Thus, many of them dressed in such a way that their real identities would be hidden (RES-TEC-FGD, Personal Communication, 7/9/2016).



Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figures 8-10: Dancers and chanters dressed in masks to hide their identities from the public (Source: Photographed by the researcher).

Papa Nantwi Festival

The *Papa Nantwi* festival is an annual festival commemorated by the people of Kumawu in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The festival is celebrated on the month of March every year at *Akwasidae* (The last Sunday of the 40-day month of the Asantes). The festival is a historical event held in honor of the exceptional bravery demonstrated by the greatest of all the ancestors of Kumawu, Nana Tweneboa Kodua I of Kumawu. Oral tradition told the researcher indicates that this great ancestor offered his life to be sacrificed to propitiate the ancestors to help the Asante Kingdom triumph over their overlord, the Denkyiras. The *Gyasihene* of Kumawu in a personal interview informed the researcher:

Our great ancestors reliably told me that there was a great animosity between the Asantes and the Denkyiras. Because the latter had a great number of warriors, they ruled over the Asante people, greedily taking their lands, farms and freedom. Therefore, the then Asante king, Otumfuo Osei Tutu I, united the seven Akan states to wage war against the Denkyiras to gain their autonomy and ultimate

independence. Fortunately at that time, a very powerful traditional priest called Okomfo Anokye assured the Asante king of victory over the Denkyiras only after a human sacrifice of one of his chiefs have been offered to please the deities and the ancestors. With great valor and selflessness, our courageous ancestor, Nana Tweneboa Kodua I gave himself up to be sacrificed so that the Asantes gain victory over the Denkyiras during the war. Right after his sacrificial death, the famous traditional priest, Okomfo Anokye, conjured the Golden stool from the skies and gave it to the Asante king. This stool is believed to be the soul and unifier of the Asante people. The war between the Asantes and the Denkyiras ensued and as prophesized by Okomfo Anokye, the Asantes defeated the Denkyiras and gained their freedom. Since that day, on the eve of every March annually, the *Papa Nantwi* festival is organized to mark the iconic bravery, selflessness and patriotic spirit exhibited by Nana Tweneboa Kodua I (TA-KU-PI, Personal Communication, 4/3/2016).

The elders interviewed in the Focus Group Discussions also made similar narrations of the events that led to the celebration. The festival is a celebration of the well fulfilled life of the great ancestor of Kumawu, Nana Tweneboa Kodua I. The elders explained the events that are undertaken during the festival, which was also observed by the researcher:

The traditional festival is marked by several cultural events, iconic amongst them is the cutting of a part of the big cow that is slaughtered to appease the souls of the Asante ancestors. Courageous persons are to cut parts of the meat amidst beatings from the crowd who are stationed around the cow meat. After getting hold of the cut meat, the person is supposed to run to a certain demarcated spot till he is free from any form of beating. It takes real strength and courage to partake in this cultural event that symbolizes strength, valor and courage of their great

ancestor, Nana Tweneboa Kodua I (ELD-KU-FGD, Personal Communication, 3/3/2016).

These revelations from the study regarding the core aim of many traditional festivals corresponds with the view of Odotei (2002) that traditional festivals are used as platforms for re-enacting the historical events that happened in the history of communities. This is true in the case of the *Papa Nantwi* festival of the people of Kumawu who use the event to remember the gallantry of their great ancestor Nana Tweneboa Kodua I while engaging in cultural events that demonstrates how to imitate his great valor.

A video on the cultural events at the *Papa Nantwi* festival on the bravery test can be watched at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsH-6uTPVJU>. The youth in the Kumawu society disclosed that they are taught many moral lessons during the festival season. They are instructed on their cultural heritage, especially, the norms, moral values and beliefs. They learn the need to demonstrate courage in times of distress and societal unrest. The youths interviewed in the focus group discussion informed the researcher of the benefits they earned from the festival. They said:

We learn many lessons about our culture during the festival event. We abreast ourselves with many customs associated with the Asante kinship. More importantly, the beautiful history and behavioral attributes of our great ancestor, Nana Tweneboa Kodua I are espoused during the festival occasion. This bolsters the appreciation we have for him and we learn to mimic his steps of exceptional gallantry and patriotic spirit for our society and country (YOU-KU-FGD, Personal Communication, 26/2/2016).

The cultural value training the youth of Kumawu mentioned that they gained from the *Papa Nantwi* festival theoretically concur with the view of Derett (2003) that festivals are cultural events that are used as mediums for creating and sustaining community values that are seen as indispensable in building the societies. Thus, when the youth attend traditional festivals, they learn many important values which help them to

develop personally while assisting them in fully participating in activities geared toward the development of societies.

Traditional Festivals and Sustainable Development of the Biodiversity

A critical evaluation of the three traditional festivals selected for the study shows that they all have aspects of the cultural events that directly and/or indirectly promotes the sustainable development of the host communities. These aspects have been discussed in the ensuing headings.

Demarcation of a tract of land and its resources as sacred for the remembrance of an iconic personality that led to the festival commemoration

The researcher observed that in all the three host communities, particular tracts of lands and their biodiversity were earmarked as sacrosanct by the people. These spots were directly related to the festival organization and they also played very significant roles in the iconic figures of their societies being remembered. For instance, the people of Anyinam-Kokofu have earmarked the *Kwantakese* forest tract as a sacred grove because it is the birth spot of the Asante king, *Opemso* Otumfuo Osei Tutu I. As such, the place is viewed as sacred. Likewise, the *Akumfi Ameyaw I Amanfo Mu* at Techiman in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana is a gazette area that is not supposed to be entered and its biodiversity resources tampered with. The researcher was hinted by the respondents at Techiman that it is the spot where the great paramount chief, Nana Akumfi Ameyaw I who instituted the *Apo* festival died and was buried. Therefore, because of deep reverence for him, the entire area is not supposed to be encroached. It is believed by the people that the place is the haven for the ancestors of the Techiman community.



Figure 11



Figure 12

Figures 11 & 12: The Fenced Nana Akumfi Ameyaw I *Amanfo mu* (Sacred Grove) at Techiman, Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana (Source: Photographed by the researcher)

In addition, the people of Kumawu have also reserved the Bomfobiri spot which has now been converted to a wildlife sanctuary and all its biodiversity resources are viewed as sacred. The place is believed to be the dwelling place of the great ancestors of the Kumawu town. These sacred areas and their biodiversity resources have been protected as a result of the traditional festivals that are linked to them. The sacred spaces give the people a sense of belongingness to their societies and provide a cementing relationship between them and their ancestors as noted by Ampili (2012). Owing to their conservation, the sacred gazette areas are

pregnant with great diversity of biological species of fauna and flora with different ecosystems. The researcher observed that it is the presence of the sacred spots in the host communities that have safeguarded their rich biodiversity and have offered the communities timely and stable rainfall patterns, bounteous agricultural harvests and supplied them with the medicine for curing diverse ailments. This realization agrees with the views of Ormsby (2013) and Mensah and Amoah (2013) who highlighted that sacred groves offer great services to the people, including boosting their agricultural yield while offering them herbal medicine as a cure for their ailments. This indicates that the deliberate demarcation of certain tracts of land as sacrilege because of their affiliation to iconic figures in local communities who are remembered during particular traditional festivals assists in the conservation of the biodiversity in the host communities.

The belief that the spirits and deities must be pleased before the festival commences

The people believe that the commemoration of a successful festival event depended largely on the deities in their communities. These deities reside in biodiversity resources in the environment such as in the large tree species, water bodies, sacred groves and thick forests. Thus, the entire society ensures that the sanity of the habitats of the deities is maintained. It was realized in the interviews and observations that before the traditional festivals commenced, there were various activities that the community members undertook in this regard. These activities were mostly environmental and helped in the development of the biodiversity in the host communities. The researcher observed that the entire members of the communities, including the traditional authorities engaged in these environmental activities. It was interesting to notice how the elderly members of the communities rigorously partook in the environmental cleansing and sanitation as well as in the tree planting activities. The elders interviewed in a Focus Group Discussion Interview disclosed that:

Our deities are those who overcome all forms of hindrances (Spiritual) that may disrupt the smooth celebration of our festival. Therefore, before the festival begins, we always

make sure that we have fully honored their will. One important will of the deities is for us to maintain the cleanliness of the town and the engagement in activities that would inure to societal growth, such as tree plantations, de-silting of choked gutters and clearing of all forms of refuse. It is an obligation for all of us, including the elderly members who are required by the gods to set precepts for the young ones to follow to engage in the environmental activities undertaken during the festival period (ELD-AN-FGD, Personal Communication, 4/10/2016).

The traditional authorities mentioned that engaging in environmentally friendly activities during the pre-festival period, attracts benevolent spirits to assist the members of the society in making a fruitful festival celebration. The traditional priest at Techiman hinted the researcher that good spirits are attracted to clean surroundings with serene atmosphere which is made possible via the plantation of several diversities of flora species. This belief is very high among the community members including the youth. No wonder the researcher noticed a massive involvement of the youth during the pre-festival environmental activities in the Techiman district. This observation of engaging in environmentally healthy activities correlates with the view of Cudny (2013) who admitted that festival commemoration (directly or indirectly) promote the ideals of sustainable development through its campaign for environmentally protective and/or preservative activities. It was noted in the study that the host communities for traditional festivals are always in their best state environmentally during the eve of festival commemoration.

The belief in the return and visit of all ancestors to the host communities during the celebrations of the traditional festivals

As vigil policing agents and perpetual stakeholders in community development, the ancestors of the host countries of traditional festivals are believed to spiritually visit their communities which they left behind after their physical passing. As guests to their former communities, they are

very keen to see the upkeep of the environment and its biological resources. Interestingly, the local people hold the belief that the ancestors are charged with power from the supreme deity either to reward or punish. Therefore, if society members rigorously engage in activities that preserves the biodiversity in the environment, the ancestors are pleased and they would be more willing to bless society members with a successful festival. The views of the elderly members in one of the study areas regarding the ancestors' huge presence during the festival occasion were expressed to the researcher:

The ancestors of our community come and stay with the community members during the entire period of the festival observance. They detest unclean surroundings and the absence of the trees that they formerly enjoyed their shades as well as the decline in the diversities of animals like the birds that they heard their songs. Therefore, we do very well to make sure that the entire society is cleansed and the biodiversity is replenished so as not to experience their anger. Our society needs their benediction to develop and therefore, we do what they like which is conserving and protecting the environment and its resources (ELD-AN-FGD, Personal Communication, 18/9/2016).

This view expressed by the respondents clearly shows their belief that the ancestors take great cognizance of activities that are undertaken in their societies and are in fact, 'spiritual policemen' as Adom (2014) opined. Thus, the comeback of the ancestors during the traditional festival celebration aids in the enrichment and development of the biodiversity in the environment which they are keenly interested as a sign of honoring them (Bonye, 2008).

The traditional festivals as platforms for reiterating taboos and values that help in the development of biodiversity

The study affirms the assertions of O'Sullivan and Jackson (2002) that traditional festivals are occasions where the community values and taboos are highlighted and strengthened. The researcher noticed that the

traditional councils in the three local communities under study used the festival celebration as platforms in educating the society members about the accepted values of the community as well as the community prohibitions in the forms of taboos that must not be breached. Many of these accepted community values and taboos help in the development of biodiversity. The traditional authorities informed the researcher that:

The festival period is a great opportunity where we educate the young ones and foreign residents of our land, the accepted moral values and taboos in our community. Through the festival program, we emphasize and reiterate the do's and don'ts in the community. For instance, we tell them the taboos associated with the plants, animals and water bodies in our community. We emphasize with historical evidence, the environmental values that are accepted, cherished and held in high esteem by the ancestors. One cardinal community value is living in harmony with nature, caring for the things in nature and treating these biodiversity resources as active members of our society (TA-AN-FGD, Personal Communication, 21/9/2016).

The environmental education that is carried out during the festival period bolsters the solidarity and allegiance of the members of the society to the accepted ideals, values and norms in the society. This notification of the study agrees with the opinion of Crespi-Vallbona and Richards (2007) that traditional festivals are tools that enhance social integration that unites society members toward living by the accepted values in the society. After the festival observance, the society members are well instructed on best environmental practices and attitudes that need to be exhibited. Recalcitrant members of the society who fail to abide and live by these sound environmental ethics that enhances biodiversity are punished in the society by the traditional council.

The maintenance of good place identity to visitors through the engagement in environmentally friendly activities

The celebration of the traditional festival throws a spotlight on the host community. Many visitors from all walks of life visit the host community during the festival observance period. These people construct their perspectives about the society they have toured during the festival commemoration. Therefore, the traditional authorities and elders in the host communities ensure that they maintain a good place identity during the festival period. This place imagery is very important to every member of the society, including the young ones. In a Focus Group Discussion Interview with the youth in one of the study areas, they told the researcher that:

Many people from the cities and other urban centres visit our town during the festival period. These people construct their general outlook of our community from what they see especially in the physical environment. Therefore, if they realized that we have poor sanitations, cut down all our trees and destroyed the purity of our water bodies, they would construct bad place identity about us while speaking ill of us to others. Because we love our community and are proud that we are organizers of this great festival [making reference to the Opemso festival], we help in developing and shaping the environment and its resources. All of us assist in clearing all forms of debris, plant trees and clear all weedy areas to make our community look nice. This would make the visitors form good ideas about our society (YOU-AN-FGD, Personal Communication, 7/8/2016).

Due to the great desire of maintaining good place identity for their communities, some wealthy members of the community volunteered and provided the resources or logistics that were needed to engage in environmentally friendly activities such as cleaning, tree plantation, sweeping and so forth. This realization of the three festivals studied concurs with the assertions of Janniskee (1996) that festival celebrations are used as avenues for enhancing the environmental conditions of host

communities through the planting of trees, renovation of old structures and parks. Also, the notifications of massive cleaning exercises in the host communities validate the view of O'Suvillan and Jackson (2002) that traditional festivals promote cleanups and fix-ups, improving the buoyancy of the infrastructure and environment (Asante, Adom & Arthur, 2017; Quinn, 2006). Some of the divisional chiefs as well as the local people who had enjoyed greener pastures in foreign lands and had returned to home financed the purchase of the cleaning detergents, brushes, cutlasses, seedlings of indigenous plant species, water cans, refuse and dustbins. Others bought drinks and meals to refresh the members who engaged in the environmental activities. Indeed, festival celebrations attract sponsorship from individuals, companies and organization (O'Suvillan & Jackson, 2002). The elderly women, who were tasked to prepare free meals in one of the study areas, did it with great joy. The jubilant crowd who engaged in the environmental activities willingly demonstrates their strong desire to maintain their community pride and place identity. These findings corroborate the notification of Quinn (2006) that maintaining a good place identity and image branding is very important to host communities of festivals. As such, they are more willing and determined to live sustainably to assist in developing and enhancing their biodiversity, thereby heightening the pride and place identity of their communities.

Adaptation of Traditional Festivals for Sustainable Biodiversity Development

The revelations from the study indicate that traditional festivals hold a very great and wonderful potential in helping in the development of the biodiversity of the host communities. This can be carried out if the planners of the festival events heighten the environmental education during the festival period while rebranding and adapting the festival to green the environment. Pragmatic measures need to be put in place to ensure that the traditional festivals are well utilized to promote the ideals of conservation and sustainability of the biodiversity in the environment. The views expressed by the respondents affirm this. For instance, the traditional authorities mentioned that heightening environmental activities

during festival celebrations would require the support of the relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Lands and Forestry. When the researcher inquired how relevant bodies could support the efforts of the host communities in the development and enhancement of the biodiversity in their environment, the traditional authorities said:

The Forestry Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency must provide the required logistics to assist the local communities in the environmental cleansing and tree planting exercises they undertake in their communities. This would prepare and motivate our people to engage in these activities. This aid is crucial because most of the local communities are impoverished. (TA-KU-FGD, Personal Communication, 4/8/2016).

The sponsorship of festival celebrations by external agencies depends on how well the festival has been planned. For instance, Fjell (2007) suggested that for traditional festivals to receive funding from companies and organizations, the festival planning committee must have qualified professionals who can cleverly plan the proceedings of the event. Thus, the lack of proper sponsorship for the festival event as suggested by the elders indicate that probably the planning committees for the three traditional festivals were not professionally qualified to perform that task. The managerial team of the traditional festivals must carefully sell the innovations and service components of the festival (Lyck, Long & Grige, 2012) so as to win sponsors. This would even stir competition among the sponsors as noted by Odotei (2002).

Aside from this initiative suggested by the traditional authorities, the conservationists added that the Forestry Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency needed to do more in terms of collaboration with the local communities' programmes for the traditional festivals. They must properly liaise with the festival organizers to be able to draw a very effective festival programme that is directed at relaying environmental education. The conservationists mentioned that:

The Forestry Commission and the host communities must sit down and plan with the festival organizing committees of the host communities. This would help the planners of the event to incorporate the required education on biodiversity conservation, which is appropriate to the local context to be offered by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Forestry Commission (CON-EPA-FGD, Personal Communication, 7/9/2016).

This proper collaboration between the conservation bodies and the host communities would be very keen to the development of the biodiversity in the regions. For instance, the head of one of the conservation bodies suggested that the collaboration would help the Forestry Commission to offer to the local communities, the seedling of the flora species that need plantations as well as the areas in protected areas that are degraded and need to be replanted. This is crucial because the local people may not know the critically endangered, endangered and threatened species that needs a great boost in the plantation as dictated by the IUCN Red List.

Moreover, the conservationists also suggested that the Environmental Protection Agency and the Forestry Commission can take advantage of the festival occasion to organize workshops and seminars on best farming, hunting and fishing practices as well as the need to implement the current scientific methods to the farmers, hunters and fisher folks in the host communities. These three professions are given much attention during such festival celebrations (Odotei, 2002). Because of the holidaying that often mark the festival period (Cudny, 2016), a larger number of the farmers and fisher folks would be available for such environmental awareness and provision of technical know-how on the modern scientific methods that ensure the sustainability and conservation of biodiversity.

Fallasi (1987) mentioned that traditional festivals always contain the ‘rites of competition’. Some of the young members of the society suggested that the competitions that are often organized during the festival occasion can be tailored for environmental training and education. When the researcher suggested this idea to the traditional authorities in the host communities

they applauded it wholeheartedly. They also added that some youth in the community can be quizzed on their knowledge on the pragmatic strategies for conserving and sustaining the biodiversity in their communities. The conservationists suggested that the moderator of the biodiversity conservation quiz should use the platform to elucidate the negative and bad farming and fishing practices that defeats the ideals of conservation and sustainability. Also, the elders in the communities indicated that the philosophical meanings in the traditional ecological knowledge evident in the folk knowledge in stories, folktales, proverbs, myths and so forth should be espoused during such quiz sessions.

Owing to the fact that festivals are ‘full of rituals of entertainment’ (Cudny, 2016), the young adults interviewed in a focus group discussion suggested that the organization of dramatic performances to re-enact how the ancestors conserved the biodiversity in the environment and their sustainable ways of living would be interesting and lesson-laden. This, the researcher believes would fill the entertainment void while instructing the society members and visitors on the need to live in harmony with nature. Interestingly, fictitious themes and stories with the names of the known ancestors in the society as the main characters of the environmentally driven drama sessions can be held during the festival season for environmental education.

Cudny (2013) cautions that the activities in festival celebrations if not carefully monitored, may result in negative effects towards the environment and its biodiversity resources. He explains that the massive turn out of people to the festival venue may result in increased environmental, noise and vehicular pollution and exacerbated waste which may get out of hand. With the three traditional festivals in focus, the researcher noted that constant announcements were given during the festival celebration period on the need to maintain sound environmental cleanliness which would please the ancestors while promoting the healthy state of the people. After each day’s event, the researcher observed that the festival organizers and the elders in the traditional councils cleverly mobilized the local people to gather all forms of waste which were deposited in waste bins at the festival venue. These waste bins were

supplied by a private waste disposal company in the country. Yet, they were woefully inadequate. However, the action was the community drive for maintaining a good place identity and an exhibition of deep respect for the ancestors as well as the elderly members of the community who were seen spearheading the environmental cleansing activities.

In addition, there were restrictions imposed on the movement of vehicles to the festival venue and other places that were of tourist interest and attraction. For instance, at Anyinam-Kokofu during the Opemso festival, the researcher noted that the road from Kokofu to Anyinam was highly restricted to only the president of the land and his entourage while all the road networks to the *Kwantakese* sacred grove, the Anyinam Traditional Palace and the house of the mother of Otumfuo Osei Tutu I were completely blocked from all vehicular entry. The researcher observed that the chiefs sat in their palanquins while the elders and other important figures in the society walked by foot. This greatly eased human and vehicular traffic while reducing the pollution from the fumes of the vehicles that plied the roads of the host communities. Festival adaptations aimed at enhancing the development of biodiversity must consider pragmatic ways of arresting all forms of activities that would likely result in the loss of biodiversity. The setting up of a festival monitoring team to oversee and arrest all forms of environmental malfeasance through the mapping up of proactive strategies can result in a very fruitful, memorable festival celebration that enhances the development of the biodiversity in the host communities.

Conclusion

The research was aimed at finding proactive ways of adapting traditional festival celebrations in helping in the development of the biodiversity in the host communities. The conclusions that have been drawn from the study are very affirmative and validate traditional festivals as viable platforms for the development of biodiversity. The core principles for the traditional festival commemoration could be heightened with the principal ancestors who are the focus of the festival events as iconic figures in biodiversity conservation and sustainability. Due to the strong interest of these ancestors in the welfare of their communities, they can be used as

mentors for the propagation of good moral values and sustainable living that enhanced the state of the biodiversity in their environment.

The belief that the deities in the community must be pleased before the organization of the festival also assists in the development of the biodiversity in the environments of the host communities. The habitual places of these deities that are primarily within the spheres of biological components such as large flora species, water bodies, sacred groves and thick forests bolsters their conservation and sustainable use. Also, their serenity is guaranteed as the belief bestows an obligation on all community members to engage in environmentally friendly activities that would aid in attracting the favor of the deities who would ensure the protection of the people and the eventual success of the festival event.

The belief in the return of the ancestors during the festival period also promotes the development of the biodiversity in the host communities. As caretakers of biodiversity, the ancestors are revered and respected by community members who try to please the ancestors by undertaking environmentally friendly activities and exercises that would put the biodiversity resources in their communities in good shape.

The early forebears of the host communities had resilient moral values that advocated for the protection of the environment and its biodiversity resources. Also, taboos that prohibited negative and unfriendly environmental activities were instituted by the deities that the early forebears left for the present generation to uphold. These taboos assist greatly in the conservation of biodiversity in the host communities. The traditional festival events are used as opportunities for reminding and informing society members, especially the younger generations on the need to cultivate the expected sound moral values while observing the taboos which are environmentally friendly. The maintenance of a good place identity also motivate the members of the host communities to engage in environmentally friendly activities that develops the biodiversity in their jurisdiction to earn a good place image from visitors and those who tour their communities during the festival period.

Finally, traditional festivals can be enhanced and adapted to promote the ideals of conservation and sustainability of biodiversity through effective collaboration between the host communities and the conservation bodies. The latter must find ways of assisting the festival organizers in planning for the festival while incorporating environmental education and awareness creation in the activities drawn for the festival. They must provide expert guidance on the environmental activities that are to be undertaken by the host communities to promote and develop the biodiversity in their environment. Also, the conservation bodies must supply and/or seek sponsorship to be able to provide the needed logistics that would be used by the host communities in their environmental activities during the festival.

The stakeholders in the host communities, especially the traditional authorities must ensure that well qualified persons are appointed as part of the festival planning and management committee. This would enable the team to draw a very good festival program to attract sponsors for the event while using the traditional festivals to promote the ideals of conservation of biodiversity. A monitoring team should be set up within the festival planning and management committee to oversee the entire festival event especially activities that would mar the state of the biodiversity in the host communities. The team must devise effective strategies for arresting all forms of environmental malfeasance such as waste and pollution of the environment. Indeed, the research has demonstrated that traditional festivals though are cultural events, when they are well adapted and enhanced, they could promote the ideals of conservation in the attitudes of the attendees and thereby developing the biodiversity of the host communities.

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DISAGGREGATED GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN GHANA

Ferdinand Ahiakpor¹ & Edmund Adinkra-Darko²

Abstract

The study examined the growth impact of government consumption, interest and transfer payments in Ghana. Using a quarterly time series data from 1984 to 2015 with maximum likelihood estimation (MLE), the results revealed that government interest payments and consumption expenditure negatively impact economic growth in both long run and short run. However, government transfers indicated a positive significant impact on growth of output. The results further revealed a bi-directional causality between government interest payment and economic growth while unidirectional causalities running from government consumption expenditure and transfer payment to economic growth were also established. The study recommends that the Ministry of Finance should take measures to check the share and growth of interest payments and consumption expenditure in government total expenditure; and government through the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme should increase and regularize its transfer payments in order to elevate the vulnerable groups from extreme poverty and stimulate aggregate demand and output.

Keywords: Consumption expenditure, transfer payment, interest payment, Economic growth

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Introduction

There exist mixed and diverse results about government expenditure and its role in promoting macroeconomic performance. While some studies found no significant relationship between government expenditure and economic growth, others have shown positive and negative significant relationships between government expenditure and growth. In terms of the direction of causality, some studies have established a bi-directional relationship while others found unidirectional relationship confirming either Keynesian Hypothesis or Wagner's Law.

Yustika and Maskie (2015) investigated the effect of local government expenditure on economic growth over the period (2008-2013) using cross-sectional and time series data (pooled data) in 24 cities in South Sulawesi. The findings revealed that the government expenditure has a positive and significant effect on economic growth. In a study of growth effects of government expenditure for a panel of 30 developing countries over the 1970s and 1980s, Bose, Haque and Osborn (2007) showed that the share of government capital expenditure in Gross Domestic product (GDP) is positively and significantly correlated with economic growth, while recurrent expenditure is found to be insignificant in explaining growth.

Also, Chinweoke et al., (2014) examined the nature and impact of Federal Government expenditure on Nigeria's economic growth for the period 1992 – 2011. The result showed insignificant but a positive impact of the Federal Government expenditure on the economic growth over the period under study. Using a panel data to analyze the effects of government spending on economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, Yasin (2003) applied the fixed-effects and random-effects estimation techniques in an endogenous growth model. The results from both estimations indicated positive and significant impact of government spending in capital formation on economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa.

However, Barro (1989) studied the relationship between government expenditure and economic growth with a panel of 98 countries and found a negative significant relationship between government consumption expenditure and economic growth. Also, Carter, Craigwell, and Lowe

(2013) examined the relationship between the components of government expenditure and economic growth in Barbados using Dynamic Ordinary Least Squares and the Unrestricted Error Correction Model (UECM). The findings generally indicated that total government spending produces a drag on economic growth, particularly in the short-run, with a much smaller impact over time. Specifically, the results suggest that while expenditures on health and social security have less impact on per capita economic growth; government expenditure on education typically has a significant and negative impact on growth, in both short run and long run.

Moreover, Adnan (2014) used the Vector Error Correction (VEC) technique to estimate both short and long run models in Ethiopia. The empirical findings highlighted a negative effect of government final consumption spending on economic growth in the long run. Hence, an increase in government consumption expenditure retards growth of the economy for the period under investigation. Afonso and Alegre (2008) also explored the relationship between the budgetary components and economic growth using a panel data and found a significant negative effect of public consumption, social security contributions, health and social protection expenditures on output growth.

Nketiah-Amponsah (2009) carried out a study on the relationship between public spending and economic growth over the period 1970-2004. Both aggregated and disaggregated data on government expenditure were used. The results indicated that aggregate government spending retards economic growth. Again, the study highlighted that health and infrastructure expenditures promote economic growth while education has no significant impact on growth in the short run. Appiah, (2014) examined the relationship between government expenditure and economic growth in Ghana using the maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) technique and cointegration within the framework of ARDL. The results revealed adverse effect of aggregate government expenditure on economic growth in the long run, however, the relationship was found to be positive in the short run. The findings of the disaggregated analysis indicated that capital expenditure stimulates growth. Recurrent expenditure, on the other

hand, was found to be negatively related to economic growth for the study period.

Antwi, Mills and Zhao (2013) examined the key macroeconomic determinants of growth in Ghana by employing the Johansen approach to cointegration which is more suitable and efficient for examining the number of cointegrating vectors without relying on an arbitrary normalization. The study covered a period of 1980 to 2010. They found that labour force, physical capital and inflation positively impact output growth in the long run in Ghana.

On the direction of causality between government expenditure growth and economic growth, Kamasa and Ofori-Abebrese (2015) empirically analysed the causal relationship between government expenditure growth and GDP growth in Ghana for the period 1980–2010. They employed vector autoregressive (VAR)/Granger causality analysis developed by Sims (1980) and Granger (1969). Granger causality test conducted provided a unidirectional causality running from GDP growth to government expenditure growth. This finding provides support for the Wagner's law of expanding state activities for Ghana. The result also suggests that government must focus on policies that would create the enabling environment for growth to thrive rather than increasing its expenditure with the aim of increasing GDP growth. However, the study did not make clear which specific policies could be adopted to create the needed enabling environment for economic growth to occur.

Al-Faris (2002) investigated the relationship between government expenditure and economic growth in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar using annual time series data from 1970-1997. Multivariate cointegration approach was used. The result revealed a unidirectional causality between government expenditure and economic growth with the causality running from GDP growth to public expenditure, which supports Wagner's law.

In spite of the vast studies conducted on the relationship between government expenditure and economic growth, it is observed that none of the studies disaggregated government expenditure to incorporate government interest payments. But governments are always borrowing to meet their expenditure and each of the loans is contracted with interest. Hence, there is the need to investigate the relationship between economic growth and government expenditure components such as government consumption expenditure, general government transfer and government interest payments - which constitutes Government of Ghana second largest expenditure component after compensation of employees. This is the gap in knowledge this study intends to bridge. The study therefore re-examines the relationship between government expenditure and economic growth in Ghana by disaggregating government expenditure to incorporate government consumption expenditure, general government transfers and government interest payments.

Empirical Model Specification and Estimation technique

The neoclassical Solow growth model serves as the foundation for specifying the empirical model for the study. Following Devarajan et al., (1996); Bose et al., (2007); Herath (2012) and Appiah, (2014), the Total Factor Productivity (TFP) is specified as:

$$A_t = f(GXP, CPI, TR) \quad (1)$$

where GXP denotes aggregate government expenditure, CPI represents consumer price index, and TR is tax revenue. Then equation 1 can be re-stated as:

$$A_t = GXP_t^{\beta_1}, CPI_t^{\beta_2}, TR_t^{\beta_3} \quad (2)$$

Given the Cobb-Douglas production function as:

$$Y_t = A_t K_t^\alpha L_t^\beta \ell_t^\varepsilon \quad (3)$$

Substituting equation 2 into 3, and representing Y by RGDP the extended Cobb-Douglas production function to represent the production technology of an economy is specified as follows:

$$RGDP_t = \eta K_t^\alpha, GXP_t^{\beta_1}, CPI_t^{\beta_2}, TR_t^{\beta_3}, L_t^{\beta_4}, \ell_t^\varepsilon \quad (4)$$

But aggregate government expenditure (GXP) will be disaggregated into government interest payments (IP) - long term interest payment is used as proxy for government interest payments, general government transfers (TP) and general government final consumption expenditure (CXP) to obtain (5)

$$RGDP_t = \eta K_t^\alpha, IP_t^{\beta_1}, TP_t^{\beta_2}, CXP_t^{\beta_3}, CPI_t^{\beta_4}, TR_t^{\beta_5}, L_t^{\beta_6}, \ell_t^\varepsilon \quad (5)$$

By taking the logarithm of the some of the variables (RGDP, IP, TP, CPI and K) in equation (5), (6) is obtained. The other variables such as CXP, TR and L are not logged because they are measured in percentages.

$$\ln RGDP_t = \ln \eta + \alpha \ln K_t + \beta_1 \ln IP_t + \beta_2 \ln TP_t + \beta_3 CXP_t + \beta_4 \ln CPI_t + \beta_5 TR_t + \beta_6 L_t + \varepsilon_t \ln \ell_t \quad (6)$$

Letting $\ln \eta = \beta_0$ and $\ln \ell_t = 1$, equation (7) can be written as

$$\ln RGDP_t = \beta_0 + \alpha \ln K_t + \beta_1 \ln IP_t + \beta_2 \ln TP_t + \beta_3 CXP_t + \beta_4 \ln CPI_t + \beta_5 TR_t + \beta_6 L_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (7)$$

The final equation to be estimated is specified as follows:

$$\Delta \ln RGDP_t = \beta_0 + \alpha \Delta \ln K_t + \beta_1 \Delta \ln IP_t + \beta_2 \Delta \ln TP_t + \beta_3 \Delta CXP_t + \beta_4 \Delta \ln CPI_t + \beta_5 \Delta TR_t + \beta_6 \Delta L_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (8)$$

With the estimation of the growth effect of the independent variables, the study employed the MLE technique. For the direction of causality between government expenditure components and economic growth, the Granger causality test within the framework of cointegration and error-correction models was utilised. In order to explore the time series properties of the data, Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) and the Phillip-Perron (PP) techniques were employed. Finally, the short-run and long run relationships between the variables were determined using the ARDL approach to cointegration proposed by Pesaran and Shin (1998). Definition and measurement of variables used in the model are presented in Appendix A.

Data and Data Source

A quarterly time series data from 1984 to 2015 were used. The data were sourced from the World Bank (WDI) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP) fiscal data.

Results and Discussion

The result presented in Appendix B shows that all the variables used in the study are stationary. In addition, the result of the bound test for cointegration presented in Appendix C reveals that there exists a long run relationship between government expenditure components and economic growth. Appendix D also indicates there is no evidence of autocorrelation and the error term are normally distributed. On the other hand, the CUSUM and CUSUMSQ plots as shown in Appendix E and F respectively indicate stability of coefficients of the economic growth functions.

Long Run Relationship

The results as indicated in Table 1 show that IP, CXP and CPI have negative effects on economic growth whilst TP, K, TR and L show positive effects on output growth. The coefficient of government interest payments is statistically significant at 10 percent, indicating that if the government interest payments increase by 1 percent, economic growth, measured by real GDP growth will decrease by approximately 0.01 percent. This means growth of government interest payments retards economic or output growth. This negative effect of interest payments on economic growth lends support to the argument raised by García et al., (2006) who claim that interest payments impact negatively on long-run economic growth due to its crowding-out effects on other productive expenditures. The implication is that resources which could have been used to acquire capital assets are used to defray interest burden which adversely impacts the growth of output. The impact of interest payments on growth becomes more severe when government has to pay the interest through taxes. Thus, increase in taxes could reduce household or individual disposable income and returns on investment; increase cost of production; and eventually increase general price level. All these ultimately result in a fall in aggregate demand and output.

The coefficient of government transfer payments carried the expected positive sign and statistically significant at 1 percent. This suggests that if the government transfer payments increase by 1 percent, then the

economy will grow by an estimated 0.054 percent in the long-run (as indicated in Table 1). This outcome is in line with the Keynesian hypothesis which argues that government transfer payments are crucial for economic growth and that high transfer payments improve long-term economic growth of a country. This finding further confirms the findings of Twumasi (2012); Afonso and Furceri (2008) who found a positive effect of government transfer payments on economic growth for the EU countries.

In addition, the results in Table 1 indicate a negative coefficient for government consumption expenditure (-0.02819) and statistically significant at 1 percent. The negative sign associated with the government consumption expenditure confirms the theoretical position that suggests that an increase in government consumption expenditure retards the economy's steady state growth. The negative effect of government consumption expenditure reflects the crowding-out effect which is generally associated with government consumption expenditure.

Moreover, the coefficient of consumer price index (CPI) is negative and statistically significant at 1 percent. The coefficient indicates that a percentage increase in the general price level will induce output to fall by approximately 0.027 percent in the long-run. The implication is that price stability is an indispensable tool in achieving economic growth because inflation impedes domestic demand and escalates the cost of production thereby decelerating the rate of growth of the economy. This result reaffirms the finding of Frimpong et al., (2006) who found a significant and negative connection between general price level and economic growth. The result further supports that of Gokal and Hanif (2004), Ahmed and Mortaza (2005), and Georgantopoulous and Tsamis (2012) who indicated a statistically significant long run inverse relationship between inflation and economic growth.

As expected, from Table 1, the coefficient of physical capital stock is positive and statistically significant at 1 percent. This indicates that, if the country's stock of capital goes up by 1 percent, holding all other things constant, the economy will grow by approximately 0.090 percent in the

long run. This means physical capital stock contributes positively to economic growth in the long- run in Ghana. The established direct correlation between capital stock and output growth is consistent with the classical economic theory, and supports the claim made by Yasin (2003), Alexiou (2009), and Ocran (2011) that growth capital stock impacts output growth positively.

Further, the coefficient of tax revenue has the expected positive sign, and statistically significant at 10 percent. This means when government tax revenue increases by 1 percent, output will grow by approximately 0.004 percent in the long run. The justification for this positive relationship between tax revenue and economic growth is that, government revenue generated through tax could be used to finance its capital expenditure and transfer payments with ultimately result of growth of the economy. This finding favours the argument by Mullen and Williams (1994), Ocran (2011), Ogbonna and Ebimobowei (2012), and Antwi et al., (2013) who established significant and a positive relationship between economic growth and tax revenue.

The coefficient of labour force also has its expected positive sign and is statistically significant at 1 percent. Thus, if labour force increases by 1 percent, real GDP will accordingly increase by estimated 0.05 percent in the long run, holding all other things constant. What ought to be emphasized here is that, a mere growth of labour force would not lead to the desired growth of output hence the labour force must be equipped with the required skills and expertise to be able to realise its positive effect on output growth. This result supports the view of Frimpong et al., (2006) who indicated that labour is important in explaining economic growth in the long run.

Table 1: Estimated Long-Run Coefficients using the ARDL Approach

ARDL(2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 2) selected based on SBC

Dependent Variable: LNRGDP

Regressor	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Ratio	P-value
Constant	-1.4460	0.26255	-5.5075	[0.015] ***
LNIP	-0.007172	0.004121	-1.7404	[0.085] *
LNTP	0.053757	0.009008	5.9677	[0.000] ***
CXP	-0.028190	0.009754	-3.0394	[0.003] ***
LNCPI	-0.026767	0.002378	-11.2580	[0.000] ***
LNK	0.089980	0.009809	9.1732	[0.000] ***
TR	0.003500	0.0017836	1.9623	[0.052] *
L	0.045226	0.010107	4.4747	[0.000] ***

Note: *** and * denote significance level at 1% and 10% respectively

Source: Computed by the authors using Microfit 4.1 package.

Short Run Relationship

The results in Table 2 indicate that all the variables are statistically significant, therefore we fail to accept the null hypothesis of no short-run relationship between the variables. The results from Table 2 suggest that the ultimate effect of previous period value of RGDP on current value of RGDP in the short-run is positive and statistically significant at 1 percent. The implication is that current value of economic growth is influenced by the previous quarters' economic growth value.

The results further show the expected negative sign of error correction term lagged one period (ECM_{t-1}) and it is highly significant at 1 percent. This confirms the existence of the cointegration relationship among the variables in the model. The coefficient of the error correction term (ECM) is -0.54920. This suggests that, about 55 percent of the deviations from the long term output growth caused by previous quarter's shocks converge back to the long run equilibrium in the current quarter of the year.

Consistent with the long-run results, the coefficient of interest payments has the theorized negative effect on economic growth in the short-run. The

coefficient is statistically significant at 10 percent. The results portray the crucial role government interest payments play in a country's growth process. This result is in harmony with that of Garcia et al. (2006) who found a significant negative relationship between government interest payments and economic growth in Chile. This relationship is attributed to the crowding-out effect of interest payments on private investments and other productive spending.

Again, the coefficient of government transfer payments also maintained its expected positive sign and statistically significant at 1 percent which is consistent with the long-run results. The result therefore implies that, if government transfer payments go up by 1 percent, output accordingly will grow by approximately 0.054 percent in the short-run. Thus, the short-run and long-run results indicate that government transfer payments have been favourable to the growth of the Ghanaian economy over the period under investigation.

In line with the long-run findings, the short-run results in Table 2 indicate a negative coefficient of government consumption expenditure at 5 percent level of significance. This means that in the short-run, if the government consumption expenditure increases by 1 percent, real GDP will decline by an estimated 0.003 percent, which is less than the long-run coefficient of 0.028 percent. This shows the relevance of addressing high government consumption expenditure in Ghana.

The coefficient of consumer price index in the short-run dynamic equation maintained its expected negative sign. It is statistically significant at 1 percent which mirrors the long-run result. The result depicts that a percentage increase in consumer price index in the short-run will decrease real GDP by approximately 0.014 percent. However, the negative effect of consumer price index on economic growth is less severe in short-run (-0.014) than in the long-run (-0.027). This outcome mimics the finding of Asiedu (2006) who put forward that a nation can reduce the level of price distortions in the economy if it desires to achieve high level of economic growth.

Again, consistent with the long-run estimate, the coefficient of capital stock kept its theorized positive sign and statistically significant at 10 percent. The results indicate that 1 percent increase in capital stock will induce 0.092 percent growth in real GDP in Ghana in the short run. The result is again consistent with the empirical result of Ocran (2011) who established a significant positive effect of capital stock on output growth in South Africa.

The coefficient of tax revenue also has its expected positive sign, and statistically significant at 5 percent in the short run. As presented in Table 2, when government tax revenue improves by 1 percent, real GDP will accelerate by approximately 0.004 percent in the short run. Tax revenue is a principal tool government uses to execute its expenditures and useful in achieving sustained growth targets. This result turns to support the long run results and the argument put forward by Mullen and Williams (1994), Ocran (2011), and Ogbonna and Ebimobowei (2012) that tax revenue has significant and a positive effect on real GDP. However, this finding conflicts with that of Dackehag and Hansson (2012) who found a negative relationship between tax revenue and economic growth. This negative relationship is explained by the distortions that raising tax revenues cause on economic activities. Worlu and Nkoro (2012) also found no significant relationship between tax revenue and economic growth in Nigeria.

Labour force has the expected positive sign and statistically significant at 1 percent. This implies that as proportion of the labour force in Ghana increases by 1 percent, holding all other things constant, real GDP will improve by an estimated 0.045 percent in the short run.

Table 2: Estimated Short-Run Coefficients

ARDL(2, 0, 2, 0, 2, 0, 0, 2) selected based on SBC

Dependent Variable: LNRGDP

Regressor	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Ratio	P-values
Constant	-0.58304	0.26166	-2.2283	[0.029]**
Δ LNRGDP(-1)	0.75696	0.094273	8.0295	[0.000]***
Δ LNIP	-0.007168	0.004102	-1.7473	[0.083]*
Δ LNTP	0.053694	0.008947	6.0012	[0.000]***
Δ CXP	-0.003448	0.001609	-2.1429	[0.035]**
Δ LNCPI	-0.013732	0.001388	-9.8944	[0.000]***
Δ LNK	0.091857	0.005486	1.6744	[0.097]*
Δ TR	0.003566	0.001657	2.1519	[0.034]**
Δ L	0.045217	0.010061	4.4943	[0.000]***
ECM(-1)	-0.54920	0.05790	-9.4888	[0.000]***
R-Squared	0.94807	R-Bar-Squared	0.94151	
R-Squared	0.94807	R-Bar-Squared	0.94151	
S.E. of Regression	0.00865	F-stat. F(9, 89)	9.2083	[0.000]***
Mean of Dep. Variable	0.00927	S.D. of Dep. Variable	0.03579	
Residual Sum of Squares	1.74739	Equation Log-likelihood	27.6540	
Akaike Info. Criterion	42.6544	Schwarz Bayesian Criterion	30.3819	
DW-statistic	2.0850			

Note: ***, **, and * denote significance level at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively

Source: Computed by the authors using Microfit 4.1 package.

The estimated error correction term is specified as follows.

$$\text{ECM} = \text{LNRGDP} + 0.0072*\text{LNIP} - 0.0538*\text{LNTP} + 0.0282*\text{CXP} + 0.02677*\text{LNCPI} - 0.0900*\text{LNK} - 0.0035*\text{TR} + 0.0452*\text{L} + 1.4460*\text{C}$$

Direction of Causality

This study explores the Granger Causality test to determine the direction of causality between the government expenditure components and economic growth. The results as presented in Table 3 suggest that

government interest payments and economic growth have a bi-directional causality.

Table 3: Results of Pair-wise Granger Causality Tests

Null Hypothesis	F-Stat.	Prob.	Remarks
IP does not Granger Cause RGDP	3.36650	0.0355**	Reject H_0
RGDP does not Granger Cause IP	4.72317	0.0106**	Reject H_0
CXP does not Granger Cause RGDP	3.87459	0.0234**	Reject H_0
RGDP does not Granger Cause CXP	0.65257	0.5225	Accept H_0
TP does not Granger Cause RGDP	4.98115	0.0083***	Reject H_0
RGDP does not Granger Cause TP	2.25144	0.1096	Accept H_0

Note: *** and ** denote significance level at 1% and 5% respectively.

Source: Estimated by the authors using E-views 9.0 package.

The results in Table 3 further indicate that the null hypothesis that government consumption expenditure does not granger-cause economic growth is rejected at 5 percent significance. This means government consumption expenditure granger-causes economic growth in Ghana, and not economic growth granger-causing government consumption expenditure. This indicates a unidirectional causality running from government consumption expenditure to economic growth.

Lastly, the null hypothesis that government transfer payment does not granger-cause economic growth is also rejected at 1 percent significance. But the null hypothesis that economic growth does not granger-cause government transfer payment is accepted. This implies that government transfer payments granger-cause economic growth, and that there is a unidirectional causality running from government transfer payment to economic growth.

Conclusion

The study investigated the growth effect of government consumption, transfer and interest payments and the direction of causality between these government expenditure components and economic growth. The findings of the study reveal existence of long-run and short-run relationship between the variables. Government transfer payments, physical capital

stock, tax revenue and labour force indicate positive effect on the growth of output in both short run and long run. Government interest payments, government consumption expenditure and consumer price index are also statistically important determinants of economic growth but have negative effect on output growth, in both the long-run and in the short-run. Finally, the study finds a bi-directional causality between economic growth and government interest payments. Unidirectional causalities running from government consumption expenditure and transfer payments to economic growth are also indicated.

The study recommends that the Ministry of Finance should take measures to check the share and growth of interest payments in government total expenditure. These measures must include interest rate hedging through swap management, and government managing to pay its loan within the stipulated period. To ensure the effectiveness of these policies, the Ministry of Finance should ensure that the loans are used to finance projects that can generate income within a reasonable period to pay off the debts. The Ministry of Finance should establish an institution whose responsibility will be to track and ensure that any fund government releases is used for the intended project, and demand comprehensive account on each project. Also Government through the Ministry of Finance should take measures toward reducing its consumption expenditure, more importantly those that are likely to have crowding-out effects on the economy. Lastly, the study recommends that government through the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme under the Department of Social Welfare should increase and regularize its transfer payments in order to elevate the vulnerable groups from extreme poverty and stimulate aggregate demand and output.

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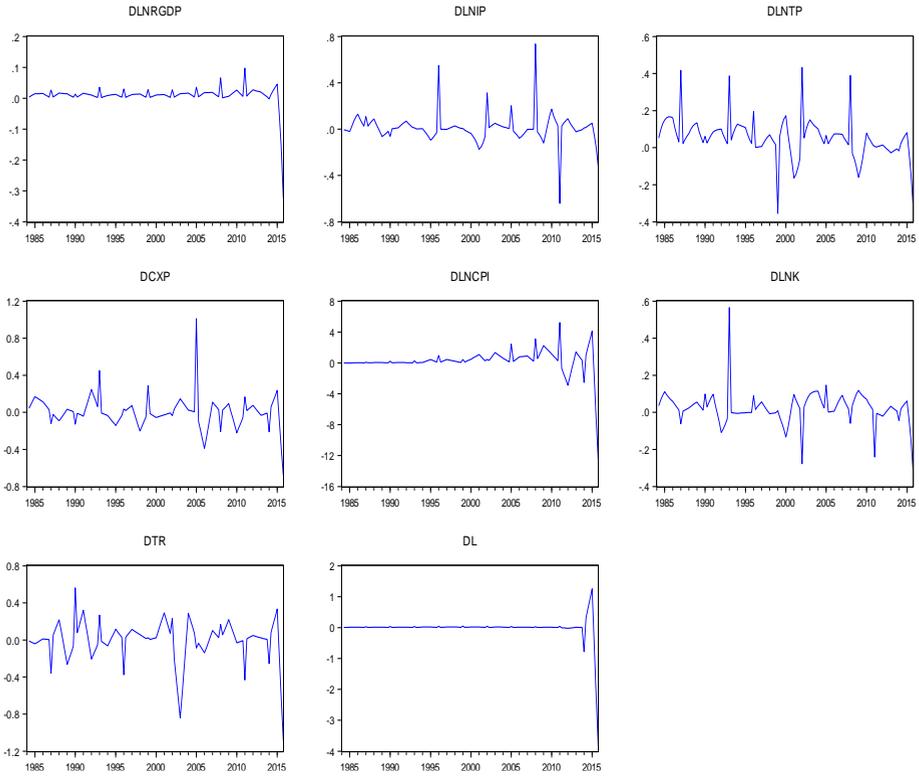
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Appendix A.

Codes	Variable Definition	Expected sign
RGDP	Real Gross Domestic Product	
K	Gross fixed capital formation is used to proxy capital stock	+
IP	Long term government interest payments is used as proxy for government interest payments	-
TP	Government transfer payments	+
CXP	General government final consumption expenditure	-
CPI	Consumer price index	-
TR	Tax revenue	+
L	Labour force	+

Appendix B: Unit root test**Unit Root Test with intercept and trend**

Levels			First Difference			
Variables	PP-Statistic	Bw	Variables	PP-Statistic	Bw	$I(O)$
LNRGD	-1.3127	1	Δ LNRGD	-8.2562	2	$I(1)$
P	[0.8803]		P	[0.0000]***		
LNIP	-2.8844	1	Δ LNIP	-9.0427	2	$I(1)$
	[0.1711]			[0.0000]***		
LNTP	-0.6133	4	Δ LNTP	-8.2518	6	$I(1)$
	[0.9763]			[0.0000]***		
CXP	-2.7476	2	Δ CXP	-5.9310	2	$I(1)$
	[0.2197]			[0.0000]***		
LNCPI	-1.6964	5	Δ LNCPI	-9.4520	2	$I(1)$
	[0.7474]			[0.0000]***		
LNK	-1.7196	5	Δ LNK	-7.3257	5	$I(1)$
	[0.7370]			[0.0000]***		
TR	-2.0092	4	Δ TR	-11.6112	9	$I(1)$
	[0.5904]			[0.0000]***		
L	-0.6604	4	Δ L	-4.0649	2	$I(1)$
	[0.9996]			[0.0019]***		



Appendix C:**Results of Bounds Tests for the Existence of Cointegration**

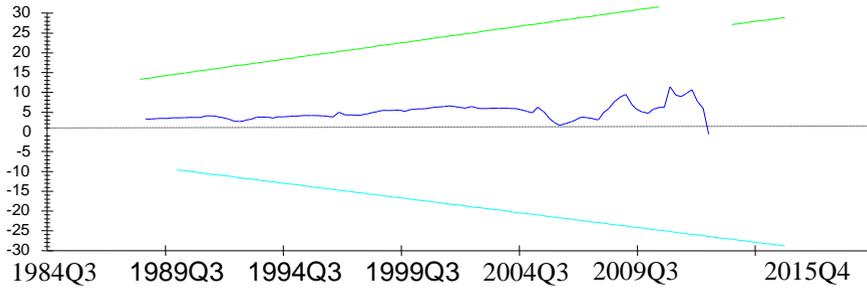
K	90% Level		95% Level		99% Level	
	I(0)	I(1)	I(0)	I(1)	I(0)	I(1)
7	2.141	3.250	2.476	3.646	3.267	4.540
Dependent Variable					F-Statistic	
F _(LN_{RGDP}) = F (LN _{RGDP} LN _{IP} , LN _T P, CX _P , LN _{CPI} , LN _K , TR, L)					4.664	

Appendix D:**Model Diagnostics**

Diagnostics Value)	Test Statistic(P- Value)
F_{Auto} (4,80)	1.6885 [0.158]
X^2_{Auto} (4)	7.5473 [0.110]
X^2_{Reset} (1)	0.1530 [0.696]
X^2_{Norm} (2)	1.5794 [0.404]
X^2_{White} (1)	8.3370 [0.842]

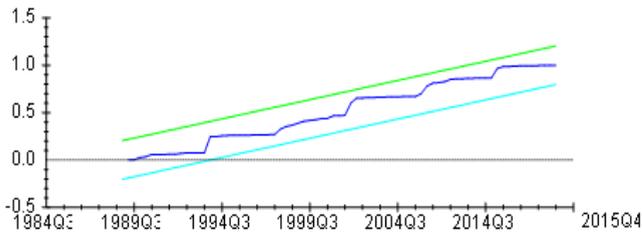
Note: X^2_{Auto} , X^2_{Reset} , X^2_{Norm} , and X^2_{White} are Lagrange multiplier statistics for test of serial correlation, functional form misspecification, non-normal errors and heteroskedasticity respectively. These statistics are distributed as Chi-square values with degree of freedom in parentheses. Values in parentheses [] are probability values.

Appendix E: Plot of Cumulative Sum of Recursive Residuals



The straight lines represent critical bounds at 5% significance level

Appendix F: Plot of Cumulative Sum of Squares of Recursive Residuals



The straight lines represent critical bounds at 5% significance level

BOOK REVIEW

***THE CORRUPT ELITES:
AN ANATOMY OF POWER AND WEALTH IN
GHANA. BY KWAME AKON NINSIN. ACCRA:
GAVOSS EDUCATION PLC LTD. 2018, PP.
XIV+130. ISBN 978-9988-2-8143-4.***

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Introduction

Corruption has been identified as one of the “most important problems facing the world today.”³ In May 2016 an anti-corruption summit – the first of its kind was held in London by the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron. It was attended by 40 participating countries including Ghana and brought together leaders, business and civil society. It was intended to come up with ways to combat global corruption which costs the world £2.5 trillion. The global collaborative effort to fight corruption has become more important than ever before because of the continued debilitating and corrosive effects of corruption on governance, security and development. In the words of Cameron (2016):

Corruption is one of the greatest enemies of progress in our time. It is the cancer at the heart of so many of the world’s

³ 2013 World Independent Network/Gallup International annual survey covering 65 countries. Broadly similar results have been found in other surveys (BBC 2010, and Pew Research Center 2014, which covered between 26 and 34 countries, respectively). The World Economic Forum’s 2016 Global Risks Report ranks “Failure of national government (e.g., failure of rule of law, corruption, political deadlock, etc.)” as the sixth-highest global risk in terms of likelihood.

problems. It affects everything – from a family’s ability to send their child to school, to the credibility of the world’s favourite sport, football...It is an enemy of progress and the root of so many of the world’s problems. It destroys jobs and holds back economic growth, traps the poorest in desperate poverty, and undermines our security by pushing people towards extremist groups.⁴

Corruption is a crime in any form that it occurs, and a significant problem in Ghana. It is a crime committed by officials (public or private) to procure gain for themselves or others. Corruption in Ghana is now regarded as persistent, permeating the society as a whole. In fact, citizens, civil society organizations, the media, development partners and even some government officials have frequently engaged in pointing out the corruption crime problem in the country. Corruption has become an election issue especially during the Fourth Republic in Ghana with the two major political parties debating over which of them is more corrupt than the other.

Quantifying this corruption problem, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scores of Ghana from 2012 when the scores became comparable are as follows: 2012 (45); 2013 (46); 2014 (48); 2015 (47), 2016 (43); 2017 (40) and 2018 (41) (where a score of 100 is very clean and 0 is highly corrupt)⁵. In addition, there have been local surveys conducted among a wide sample of Ghanaians that show similar results through their views about the level of corruption, reasons for corruption, experience with corruption, consequences of corruption, and what constitutes corruption.

There has been a flurry of publications on several aspects of corruption in Ghana including definitions, forms, level, reasons, consequences and strategies for combating it. Of all of these aspects of corruption, it is the

⁴ “Explained: David Cameron's global anti-corruption summit”. May 31, 2016 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/12/explained-david-camerons-global-anti-corruption-summit>

⁵ Ghana Integrity Initiative, Press Release on Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) dated January 29, 2019.

reasons or factors for the prevalence and escalation of corruption that have been the most debatable and perhaps the ones which have received much attention from scholars than the others. Some of them have attributed the rise in corruption to power, political party campaign finance, weak institutions, systems and processes as well as social norms and practices which have prevailed over good governance in Ghana (Werlin 1972; LeVine 1975; Price 1975; Ayee 2000; 2016).

It is within this context that this 130pp. book, *The Corrupt Elites: Anatomy of Power and Wealth in Ghana* authored by Kwame Akon Ninsin should be viewed. It is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is titled “Introduction – Corruption in Ghana: The Beginnings; Chapter 2 is on “Constructing Exclusive Institutions”; Chapter 3 is devoted to “Vectors of Corruption”. Chapter 4 titled “Reaping the Whirlwind”; and Chapter 5 is on “Conclusions: The Corruption of Politics”.

There is a seven-page foreword on “Elitism and Political Corruption: The Ghana Case” written by Professor Maxwell Owusu of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, which serves as a precursor to the five chapters. The conclusion, for instance, gives the reader an inkling of the summary of the contents of the book: “Ghana, and indeed the entire African continent lack the institutional, attitudinal and structural basis, and serious commitment for an effective and meaningful control of corruption; and poverty and human greed under capitalism are part of the blame” (p. xi).

For emphasis, the main objective of the book is captured in four paragraphs of the book. On p. xii, the book is to “crack the mystery surrounding the world of corruption that has been exponentially” (p. xii). It is to provide a “plausible explanation to the menace of corruption, especially since the country achieved political independence from Great Britain” using a historical narrative whose assumptions are to be substantiated with concrete evidence (p. xiii). It is to “explain the strong disposition to be corrupt by reference to how the dominant elites have designed governance institutions” (p. 1). It is to “throw more than adequate light on the roots and dynamics of this menace called corruption

to enable the entire nation to initiate decisive action to exorcise it from the life of this nation” (p. 2).

Apparently angered and fed up with the exponential growth of corruption, the author uses several derogatory adjectives to qualify corruption. On p. 2, the author alerts us to the fact that “Ghana today lives under the tyranny of this canker called corruption”. Corruption is a “cancerous tumour eating into various parts of the social fabric”... It is a dangerous character, a dangerous tumour, a scourge, obscene, unbridled, ravenous (p. 103), a menace, an epidemic raging throughout society (p. 2); “stupendous proportions of corruption” (p. 93); “monstrous levels of corruption” (p. 115). It is referred to as “primitive accumulation” (p. 115). Some of the internal network of elites who have been joined by a new layer of foreign partners as a result of globalization are referred to as “reckless kleptomaniacs” (p.86). I will like to add to this list of adjectives the word “rapacious” corruption.

Defining Corruption and Elites

In a disclaimer, the author is not interested in “pompous academic analyses and debates” and hence he is not concerned with issues on definition and varieties of corruption and its various functions in the political system (p. xiii). However, the foreword has largely done these for him. Accordingly, on p. x, Maxwell Owusu brought the late Chief Justice George Kingsley Acquah’s definition of corrupt practices to include bribery, hiring relatives (nepotism), giving contracts to party supporters (cronyism); and abusing privileged information to buy or sell stocks (insider trading). The causes of corruption are attributed to “weak or no well-defined legal structures, weak enforcement of the rule of law and too much unsupervised and discretionary power by government agents which are allowed by laws and the judiciary” (pp. x-xi). The pervasiveness and consequences of corruption are also highlighted on p. 2 of the Introduction.

Who are these corrupt elites? They are what the author refers to as the “dominant elites” consisting primarily of: (i) traditional rulers who have operated within traditional areas of jurisdictions and (ii) the educated

members of such entities. In other words, the dominant elites comprise the traditional elites and educated elites (p.15). Sometimes the author uses the term “political class” or “ruling elites”, who together with their accomplices in the state bureaucracy and associates in local and international business have had their integrity dented as a result of the scourge of the judgment debt for engaging in the “business of fleecing the country of its financial and other resources” (p. 87).

According to the author, the dominant elites have the following four attributes:

- (i) They establish exclusive institutions which have become the principal means for grabbing colossal amounts of public money for private use.
- (ii) They are economically poor and the exclusive institutions that they create have become vectors through which they accumulate wealth. Their wealth is not invested in industry or productive ventures but rather in real estate, the importation of goods and other risk-free ventures.
- (iii) They employ the state to create the necessary political, economic and social spaces for establishing exclusive institutions that would enable them to carry out their predatory activities. The state is privatized and Parliament is brazenly used to enact laws to establish such institutions.
- (iv) They manipulate the design and operations of the institutions they establish to achieve their accumulation objectives. It is in this realm of action that they demonstrate gross and callous impunity (p. 115).

What then are the roots and dynamics of corruption in Ghana?

Several reasons have been adduced by the author to explain the rapid increase in corruption. First, is the evolution of Ghanaian history from a pristine or perfect state associated with communal ownership of property and wellbeing into a modern state “where the imperative for wealth

creation and social progress, with emphasis on private property and individual progress and wellbeing, has bred in citizens an inordinate appetite for rampant corruption and acquisitive individualism” (p.5).

Second, is the inability of the Ghanaian dominant elites to govern but rather resort to rule through the exploitation of society, that is, being extractive, because of their weakness and lack of a coherent ideological basis to legitimize their leadership role and authority. The result is that the state institutions they create exist in the formal sense but cannot enforce rules and regulations or implement the laws and other orders that are issued by the dominant elites for the smooth administration of the country. The weakness of the dominant elites is also due to the fact that they are economically weak and fragmented before and after independence. He referred approvingly to the construction of a capitalist society in England, France and the United States of America with a distinctive group and with an independent economic base which attacked the “obstacles to a democratic version of capitalism”, something which Ghana lacks throughout its nation-building history. The English history of nation-building is used by the author as the prototype whereby the Glorious Revolution led to the “creation of inclusive and pluralistic institutions with a multiplicity of powers that act in tandem to restrain one another that none would emerge to monopolize power and exercise it at the expense of others” (p.10). He calls this a “virtuous circle” under which the inclusive institutions thrive and the rule of law reigns supreme resulting in “very weak incentive to covert public money and bend the law in favour of and to protect a minority that is in a position of power” (pp. 10-11). As rightly pointed out by Acemoglu and Robinson (2012: 308-310), “a powerful process of positive feedback that preserves these institutions in the face of attempts at undermining them and, in fact, sets in motion forces that lead to greater inclusiveness. The virtuous circle of inclusive institutions not only preserves what has already been achieved but also opens the door to greater inclusiveness”.

Third, because of the weak economic base of the dominant elites, their material poverty and fragmentation, they have deliberately created exclusive institutions which monopolize political and economic spaces,

restrict access to opportunities, and inhibit participation in social processes on equal basis. They encourage impunity, lack accountability and internal structures to act as a check on abuse of power and no incentive to live by the law (p. 46). In addition, exclusive and extractive institutions create conditions for inter-elite conflict. In the words of the author, “the seductive spell of power and wealth plunges the elites into an orgy of political fights to control the state as well as the plush resources available for grabs. In the process, every facet of the nation’s life, every event or development is politicized, and generates acute political competition, often to the point of threatening the unity and stability of the nation and state” (pp. 64-65).

Fourth is ineffective leadership which lacks the capacity to build pluralistic participatory institutions and fails to engage in *creative destruction* theory of Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), the qualities of which include the capacity to introduce the most radical innovations and embark on such technological changes that would replace old technologies, weaken existing class and abolish old political and economic privileges (p. 33).

Fifth, even though the author extols the 1992 Constitution as providing the legal framework for the establishment of inclusive political and economic institutions in spite of its imperfections, the building of inclusive institutions has been compromised by the “seductive power of hegemonic politics aimed at capturing the state to facilitate private accumulation” (p. 4). He laments that in spite of the multi-party basis for constituting the legislature and carefully crafted separation of powers regime, elections which have been conducted in pursuit of democratic governance have produced parliament that is defined more by ultra-majoritarian politics, which is exclusivist than consensus politics. Parliament is not only weak but it is also exclusivist for the promotion of the winner-takes-all. Its complicity in condoning corruption has been underscored. Using the CNTCI loan agreement of March 2004, the author demonstrates how “successive governments have willfully degraded the Parliament of Ghana, which was intended in the 1992 Constitution to function as the centre piece of parliamentary democracy and good governance, and transformed it into an instrument for peddling corrupt practices at the

highest level of the governance architecture of the country” (p. 89). Therefore, the CNTCI saga portrays how the executive could freely employ its power in Parliament to achieve ends however unethical such ends might be and without regard to the public good (p. 90). In a nutshell, Parliament has therefore become what the author calls “a lame duck.”

Six, the author blames other institutions as contributing to corruption. For instance, the extensive appointing power of the President has not only led to the appointment of “cronies – people who cannot decline requests or orders made by the appointing authority”, but also contributed to corruption (p. 108). Furthermore, the persistence of the customary land tenure institutions after many land reforms is seen as accounting for the prevailing chaos and corruption in the country’s land administration. Politicians for instance, have appropriated land and other state properties at the end of their tenure, and have amply rewarded their cronies in the public service and private sector with state/public lands without complying with the principles of accountability, justice and equity (p. 107).

Seventh, even though the institutional framework exists to promote oversight and accountability to fight corruption, the institutions are either not well resourced or their recommendations are not implemented. According to the author, the several independent bodies established by the Constitution are “independent on paper and have therefore become the agents of the government. They have been captured by the state and make to act in compliance with the dictates of the government” (p.117).

In addition, despite several reforms such as the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) and Treasury Single Account (TSA) to ensure a fool-proof public financial management system, the system continues to be “badly tainted with corruption partly due to the persistent problem of weak compliance and weak internal control systems” as indicated in the reports of the Auditor General over the years (p. 118).

Recommendations

In conclusion, the author offers the following recommendations that he thinks will provide a more productive approach for addressing the corruption menace:

- (i) The review of the 1992 Constitution not only to reduce the power of the President but also to strengthen institutions of governance to become more inclusive and capable of dealing with corruption.
- (ii) Reform Parliament to become a truly inclusive pluralist institution to replace the winner-takes-all system with an appropriate version of Proportional Representation. This will break the dominance and control of political power as well as governance institutions and processes by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC) because of a wide array of political parties and organized interest groups. It will become more assertive and a countervailing force than it is currently.
- (iii) Amend the Standing Orders of Parliament to review the structure of its committees so that business of such committees would be conducted in a democratic manner free from domination by a single political party.
- (iv) Redesign Parliament and all existing and future governance institutions and also the inclusive principles and ensure that they are operated on the principles of democratic governance.
- (v) Appointment of an independent public prosecutor with guaranteed independence and security of tenure and well-endowed with financial and human resources.

Some strengths of the Book

The strengths of this book are five-fold. First, Emeritus Prof. Ninsin should be highly commended for finding time to write this persuasive and well researched book on the hot topic of corruption. To write a book on the subject of corruption with copious evidence shows the sterner stuff of which Professor Ninsin is made. I have read it with keen interest and I am

convinced that it has contributed to the literature on the political economy of corruption in Ghana. Second, the use of the concepts of “virtuous circle” and “creative destruction” is a new addition to the literature on corruption. Third, the adoption of the historical narrative gives one a better understanding and perspective on the phenomenon of corruption in Ghana. Fourth, I found the examples and choice of cases to buttress points illuminating and, at the same time, intriguing. The several examples and case studies in the constitutional, legal and institutional framework, chieftaincy, land, cocoa and the procurement sectors, judgment debt, the different political persuasions and regimes, institutional appointments of the President, reforms, colonial and post-colonial policies including the economy from independence to date, have no doubt demonstrated that the “dominant elites seek power for the sole purpose of enhancing the opportunities for primitive or private accumulation; and corruption of various forms is the principal mechanism by which the dominant elites in Ghana achieve their accumulation objective” (p. 93). Fifth, the element of comparison is reinforced by the analysis within successive historical conjunctures and the examples from the United Kingdom, USA, France and Australia on the building of inclusive and pluralistic institutions. Sixth, this is one of the few books I have reviewed with minimal typographical errors. See p. 5 “bread in Ghanaians” instead of “bred in Ghanaians” (p. 5); “exlusive” instead of “exclusive” (p. 12); “cummulative” instead of “cumulative” (p. 72); “excutive” instead of “executive” (p. 86). This shows that the author did a thorough proof-reading, which is a rare commodity in the book publication industry especially these days.

Some weaknesses of the Book

There is no perfect publication even if it is blind peer-reviewed. This is equally true of this book under review. First, even though the book referred to both seminal and current literature, it could still have greatly benefited from the burgeoning literature on corruption in Ghana and elsewhere. A 384-page bibliography on corruption and anticorruption was compiled by Matthew C. Stephenson of the Harvard Law School in July

2016⁶ and this could have substantially beefed up the literature in the book. However, this criticism is weakened by the author's disclaimer to "stay away from pompous academic analyses and debates ... but rather to provide a simple straightforward narrative" to explain the rise in the incidence of corruption across different regimes.

Second is the faith of the author in Parliament, which I think is overly optimistic and perhaps unrealistic. He calls for a reform of Parliament through the introduction of proportional representation, review of its standing orders, and redesign governance institutions to ensure that they operated on the principles of democratic governance. We all know that this can only be done with the review of the 1992 Constitution. This recommendation is a difficult one especially when we have already had one round of constitutional review. In addition, those benefiting from the status quo will provide resistance for the necessary constitutional reform to take place. Parliament has on some occasions been tainted with corruption especially when those making the allegations are coming from and within Parliament itself. The review of the Constitution has been advocated by several people but is it really a review of the Constitution which will fight corruption? I have pointed out elsewhere (Ayea 2019) that no amount of constitutional review or reform will provide the needed magic wand unless Ghanaians change their attitudes and behaviour. We should rather declare war against indiscipline of all forms of which corruption is part.

As a country we should develop a culture of running effective and efficient institutions. Institutions do not run themselves; rather they are run by people, who are paid to do it. This means appointing or electing people based on the merit principle rather than on non-merit considerations. It also means developing the capacity of human resources and retaining them as well as giving them the free hand to perform their functions within the confines of the constitutional-legal framework. It also means that we should have a more comprehensive perspective on institutions and

⁶ see <http://www.law.harvard.edu/faculty/mstephenson/>

therefore not seeing them as entities or organizations but rather rules and enforcement mechanisms (Ayee 2019).

Third, the author supports the appointment of an independent public prosecutor, who should have the independence, tenure and resources. He views this appointment as a promising complement which will facilitate the work of Parliament. What the country currently has is the special prosecutor which is different from the independent public prosecutor in other countries. His independence has been questioned while resources to enable him perform his duties have not been provided. The Auditor General in a lecture in the third week of September 2018 had doubted the capacity of the special prosecutor to deliver on his mandate because the office is fraught with numerous challenges. Accordingly, over one year of the appointment of the special prosecutor, the enthusiasm which greeted his appointment has waned. I am sure the author's optimism and enthusiasm in the special prosecutor have also waned.

Fourth, the author does not seem to have faith in the ability of civil society organizations to fight corruption because in his view "the conventional remedies are bound to be consequential" and that a more productive approach to deal with corruption buttressed by his analyses is to reform Parliament (p.116). This assertion belittles the immense contribution of civil society and the media in the fight against corruption in this country.

Fifth, the book does not mention the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan (NACAP), which was adopted by Parliament in July 2014, even though it was developed in 2011 following intensive consultations at the national, regional and district levels. It is the blue-print to fight corruption. The vision of the NACAP is to create a "sustainable democratic society founded on good governance and imbued with high ethics and integrity" (p. 36). Its mission is to "contextualize and mobilize efforts and resources of stakeholders, including Government, individuals, civil society, private sector and the media, to prevent and fight corruption through the promotion of high ethics and integrity and the vigorous enforcement of applicable laws" (Republic of Ghana 2015: 36).

The realization of the vision and mission is embodied in its four strategic objectives, which are: (i) build public capacity to condemn and fight corruption and make its practice a high-risk, low-gain activity; (ii) institutionalize efficiency, accountability and transparency in the public, private and not-for profit sectors; (iii) engage individuals, media and civil society organizations (CSOs) in reporting and combating corruption; and (iv) conduct effective investigations and prosecution of corrupt conduct (Republic of Ghana 2015: 36).

Sixth, the monetization of politics through uncontrolled political party financing and non-enforcement of regulations is one of the major sources of corruption. The *quid pro quo* has been a proverbial nightmare for all governments which have come to power as financiers demand their “pound of flesh”. This monetization of politics has, however, received no attention in the book. One would have expected that it will be in the final chapter on “Conclusions: The Corruption of Politics”, but it is rather devoted to the dominant elites and how they have created exclusive institutions which have created several opportunities for massive corruption in the political economic and natural resource sectors.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding these weaknesses, I will recommend the book, *The Corrupt Elites: Anatomy of Power and Wealth in Ghana* to any student or general reader in Ghanaian politics and administration. Our understanding of the genesis of corruption is deepened by the book. It has drawn attention to the failure of the constitutional, legal and institutional framework to fight corruption, which the author described as attaining the level of a “deified norm of public behavior” in the country. In addition, the book has reinforced the theory of political settlement (often referred to as competition clientelism) in which there is a common understanding or agreement, usually among the elites on how power and resources are to be distributed, who is to be included or excluded and how state-society relations are to be articulated. Political settlement is often achieved through contestation, negotiation and compromise. Agreement on the rules of the game includes both formal institutions and crucially, informal institutions. It is this interplay between how formal institutions and

informal understandings and arrangements interact that shapes the way in which governance works and helps explain why settings that share similar formal institutional compositions as well as endowments can have a very different developmental trajectories and outcomes (Menocal 2017). Political settlement amplifies the vulnerability of politicians when in power and their policy actions tend to be geared towards distributional initiatives, designed to deliver resources and economic opportunities to patrons and clients of the ruling government as well as deliver visible goods and services to as much of the population as possible. Accordingly, the book's contribution to knowledge cannot therefore be underestimated. It is a worthwhile and welcome addition to publications on Ghanaian politics and administration especially on the theory of political settlement.

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